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# ACCOUNT

OF THE

# LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

## JAMES BEATTIE, LL.D.

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# LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

## JAMES BEATTIE, LL.D.

LATE PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC IN THE MARISCHAL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

*INCLUDING MANY OF HIS ORIGINAL LETTERS.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

---

BY

SIR WILLIAM FORBES,

OF PITSLIGO, BART.

ONE OF THE EXECUTORS OF DR BEATTIE.

---

SECOND EDITION.

VOL. II.

*Mihi quidem quamquam est ereptus, vivit tamen, semperque vivet. Virtutem enim amavi illius viri, quæ extincta non est. Nec mihi soli versatur ante oculos, qui illam semper in manibus habui, sed etiam posteris erit clara et insignis.*—Cic. *Læl. De Amic. cap.* 27.

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1807.

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THE

# LIFE OF JAMES BEATTIE, LL.D.

## SECTION III.—CONTINUED.

In the month of October, 1773, the chair of professor of natural and experimental philosophy, in the university of Edinburgh, became vacant, by the death of Dr James Russel, by whom it had been long ably filled. As that event had been for sometime foreseen, several gentlemen had turned their thoughts towards it as candidates. But the magistrates, who are the electors, very properly resolved to be in no hurry in filling up the vacancy, in order that there might be time and opportunity to dispose of the chair in such a manner, as might best support the re-

putation of the university. As the winter session was soon to open, however, Dr Fergusson, professor of moral philosophy, agreed, in the mean time, to deliver lectures also in natural philosophy, which he had formerly taught.

A few days after the death of Dr Russel, I received a visit from one of the magistrates, who was of my particular acquaintance, and who knew my intimacy with Dr Beattie. He came to inform me, he said, that several of the members of the town-council kept themselves disengaged, until they should know whether Dr Beattie meant to become a candidate for the vacant chair. They were aware, he added, that Dr Beattie's eminence lay in another branch of science; but he said, he believed Dr Fergusson, who had formerly taught the class of natural philosophy, would be well-pleased to resume it, and thereby leave the chair of moral philosophy open for Dr Beattie, which, he made no doubt, his high reputation would readily secure for him. I thanked the gentleman for this warm expression of his esteem of Dr Beattie, on which I set the higher value, from being absolutely certain that they were strangers to each other; and that he interested himself, therefore, for Dr Beattie, merely

from the consideration of his singular merit, and from a regard for the prosperity and reputation of the university of Edinburgh. For although a set of civil magistrates, very little, if at all acquainted with science, or the merits of scientific men, may seem but indifferently qualified for the choice of professors of a university; yet it is a fact, which reflects no little credit on the magistrates of Edinburgh, that, in the election of professors, they have very seldom allowed themselves to be swayed by political interests; but have generally elected those, who have been deemed best qualified to fill the vacant chairs; justly considering the reputation and prosperity of the university to be of the greatest importance to the welfare of the city.

I lost no time in communicating this intelligence to Dr Beattie. I well recollected, indeed, the aversion he had shown, from becoming a member of the university of Edinburgh, on a former occasion, when a vacancy of the chair of moral philosophy was likely to take place; but I knew not whether he might still be of the same mind, or whether the same reasons still subsisted, which had weighed with him at that period; and therefore, I left it for himself to decide, what

he should judge to be most conducive to his interest, or most consistent with his wishes. He well knew the earnest desire I had, that he should think of removing to Edinburgh, because I judged he might have it in his power to do more good here, than where he then was, by his talents having a wider range, and greater scope, for the exertion of their influence. Perhaps, too, I will not deny, I may have been somewhat actuated by the selfish motive of his being brought nearer to his friends in Edinburgh; and our enjoying still more the happiness of his society.

The following letter is the answer I received to the communication I made to him on the subject.

## LETTER LXXIV.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d October, 1773.

"The late arrival of the post yesterday, put it out of my power to answer your most obliging letter in course. I shall not, at present, attempt to tell you (indeed I could not) how much my

heart is touched, by the many kind and generous expressions of friendship, contained in your excellent letter: to be honoured with so great a share of the esteem and affections of such persons as you, is surely of all earthly blessings the greatest. But I shall proceed to business, without further preamble.

"Some years ago, I should have thought myself a very great gainer, by exchanging my present office with a professorship in the university of Edinburgh. Such an event would have doubled my income, without subjecting me to one half of the labour which I now undergo. But those were only secondary considerations. My attachment to Edinburgh arose, chiefly, from my liking to the people; and surely it was natural enough for me to love a place, in which I had, and still have, some of the dearest and best friends that ever man was blessed with. Nor had I then any reason to fear, that either my principles, or the general tenor of my conduct, could ever raise me enemies in any Christian society; it having been, ever since I had any thing to do in the world, my constant purpose to do my duty, and promote peace; and my singular good fortune, to obtain from all who knew me, a share of esteem

and regard, equal to my wishes, and greater than my deservings. Nor, at this time, are my affections to Edinburgh at all diminished. I am still known to some members of that university, whose talents, and whose virtues, I hold in the highest estimation, and with whom I should account it my honour to be more nearly connected; and the favours I have received from very many persons of distinction in the place, demand my most hearty acknowledgments, and shall ever be cherished in my remembrance, with every sentiment that the warmest gratitude can inspire.

"And yet, my dear friend, there are reasons, and those of no small moment, which determine me to give up all thoughts of appearing as a candidate on the present occasion; and which would determine me to this, even though I were absolutely certain of being elected. Nay, though my fortune were as narrow now, as it lately was, I should still incline rather to remain in quiet where I am, than, by becoming a member of the university of Edinburgh, to place myself within the reach of those (few as they are) who have been pleased to let the world know that they do not wish me well; not that I have any reason to mind their enmity, or to dread its consequences.

They must not flatter themselves, that they have ever been able as yet to give me a moment's uneasiness, notwithstanding the zeal with which they have spoken against me. My cause is so good, that he, who espouses it, can never have occasion to be afraid of any man. I know my own talents, and I am not ignorant of theirs; I do not (God knows) think highly of the former, indeed I have no reason; but I am under no sort of apprehension in regard to the latter; and as to the esteem of others, I have no fear of losing it, so long as I do nothing to render me unworthy of it. But I am so great a lover of peace, and so willing to think well of all my neighbours, that I do not wish to be connected even with one person who dislikes me.

"Had I ever injured the persons whom I allude to, I might have hoped to regain their favour by submission, (which, in that case, would have become me,) and by a change of conduct. But, as they are singular enough to hate me for having done my duty, and for what, I trust, (with God's help) I shall never cease to do, (I mean, for endeavouring to vindicate the cause of truth, with that zeal which so important a cause requires,) I could never hope that they would

live with me on those agreeable terms, on which I desire to live with all good men, and on which, by the blessing of Providence, I have the honour and the happiness to live with so great a number of the most respectable persons of this age.

"I must therefore, my dear friend, make it my request to you, that you would, in better terms than any I can suggest, in terms of the most ardent gratitude, and most zealous attachment, return my best thanks to the gentlemen of your council, for the very great honour they have been pleased to confer upon me; and tell them, that the city and university of Edinburgh shall ever have my sincerest good wishes, and that it will be the study of my life, to act such a part, as may, in some measure, justify their good opinion; but that I must, for several weighty reasons, decline appearing as a candidate for the present vacant professorship."

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In consequence of this reply from Dr Beattie, which, of course, I communicated to the gentle-

man who had addressed himself to me on the subject, I laid aside all thoughts of the matter.

Some months afterwards, Dr Beattie informed me, that some person, no doubt with a friendly intention, without his knowledge, had told Lord Dartmouth, that he was a candidate for the professorship; on which his Lordship had written to Sir Adolphus Oughton, offering his services to promote Dr Beattie's views. In consequence of this communication, he wrote to me, expressing his regret that his friends should have had so much trouble on his account; that he had in part communicated to Sir Adolphus his reasons for declining to be a candidate, but had referred him to me for further particulars, and desired me to shew to Sir Adolphus Oughton his letter to me of the 22d October, which I accordingly did. When Sir Adolphus sent it back to me, he accompanied it with the following note: "Re-
"turns to him Dr Beattie's very judicious letter.
"Sir A. imagines it was a view of serving the
"worthy Doctor, and rendering him more dif-
"fusively useful to his fellow subjects, not any
"solicitations from hence, that induced his Ma-
"jesty's confidential servants to wish he might
"fill the moral philosophy-chair at Edinburgh."

When I sent him this communication from our mutual friend, I wrote to him at the same time, to the following effect: "Since that time, "I have had occasion to hear the sentiments of "many of our warmest friends, as well as of "many persons of respectable character, who, "like numberless others, have attached them- "selves to you, without a personal acquaintance, "and all join, with one voice, in expressing their "wishes, that you could be prevailed on to think "more favourably of changing your present si- "tuation. But what induces me to resume this "subject particularly at present, is a conversa- "tion which I had yesterday at New Hailes. I "chanced to have your two letters in my pock- "et, which I gave to Lord Hailes to read:*

* Sir David Dalrymple, Bart. one of the judges of the supreme courts of civil and criminal law of Scotland, by the title of Lord Hailes; very eminent as a scholar, and particularly as an antiquarian. His "Annals of Scotland" is a masterly performance; in which, and in some detached pieces of historical research, he was the first to elucidate properly the early part of the history of our country and it is only to be regretted that he has not brought his work down to a later period, as it stops at a time when the history was becoming more and more interesting, and his materials more copious. "The Case of the Sutherland-peerage," although originally a law-paper, written professionally when he was at the bar, at the time when the

knowing how highly he esteems you, and how excellent a judge he is of every point like that in question. His Lordship expressed the greatest concern at the reluctance you show against

title of the young Countess, to the honours of her ancestors, was called in question, is one of the most profound disquisitions on the ancient peerages of Scotland any where to be met with.

In his other publications, which were numerous, he chiefly appears in the character of an editor. Among these, he translated and printed some favourite passages from the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, and other writers, respecting the early history of the Christian church. In those publications, he never omitted any opportunity of exposing the mistakes and misrepresentations of Gibbon; in professed opposition to whom, Lord Hailes wrote "An Inquiry into the secondary Causes which Mr Gibbon has assigned for the rapid growth of Christianity," which is justly considered as one of the ablest replies that have appeared in opposition to the sneers against Christianity, so frequently to be met with in the works of that popular, but artful and dangerous writer. As a proof of his attention to every thing that concerned religion and good morals, the following incident should not be omitted: Two vessels, bound from London to Leith, were cast away on the coast between Dunbar and North Berwick, and two-and-twenty persons drowned; the wrecks having been shamefully pillaged by the country-people, Lord Hailes immediately wrote a pamphlet, with the title of "A Sermon which might have been preached in East Lothian upon the 25th day of October, 1761, on Acts, xxvii. 1, 2. *The barbarous people showed us no little kindness.*" This he caused to be printed, and dispersed among the country people in the neighbourhood, where the fatal disaster had happened. It is a most affecting discourse, admirably calculated to convince the offenders; and the effect of it is said to have

" coming to Edinburgh, and more than once re-
" peated, that he was not at liberty to say all
" that he could say on that head. He was kind
" enough to request I would write to you, that
" such were his sentiments; and to beseech you
" to treat, with the greatest contempt, any idea
" of your meeting with any thing disagreeable
" in carrying this removal into execution. For,
" he added, what I most firmly believe to be the
" truth, that he apprehended many of what ap-
" peared unpleasant circumstances to you, would
" totally vanish, or that, in all events, you ought
" to be greatly superior to any such fears."

So anxious was Lord Hailes on this subject, that next day he wrote to me no less than two

been such, that several parcels of the goods that had been plundered, were brought privately to the church, and deposited there, after the perusal of the sermon. He published, likewise, a Collection of Sacred Poems, consisting of translations and paraphrases from the Holy Scriptures, which do equal credit to his piety and his poetical taste. As a proof, however, that he did not entirely confine his studies to subjects of a grave and dignified cast, he was also the editor of a Collection of Ancient Scottish Poems, from the " Bannatyne Manuscript," in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh; and he contributed some papers to the two periodical publications, " The World," published at London, and " The Mirror," at Edinburgh, which contain no inconsiderable portion of humour. He died 29th November, 1792.

letters which I failed not to transmit, by the first post, to Dr Beattie.

## LETTER LXXV.

LORD HAILES TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

New Hailes, 15th April, 1774.

" I am sorry to understand that Dr Beattie expresses a great unwillingness at being proposed to fill the chair of moral philosophy at Edinburgh, which, in all probability, will soon be vacant.

" If the Doctor thinks he can be as generally useful where he is, he cannot be blamed for wishing to continue where he is. But if he is persuaded that his sphere of usefulness may be enlarged, by his removal to Edinburgh, I do not see how he can, in consistency with his known principles, decline that station, where he will be more known, and have a more ample field of benefitting the rising generation.

" The magistrates of Edinburgh have shown a zeal almost without example, of supplying all the vacant professorships with the persons held to be

the best qualified. In this, they have renounced every party view, every private connection.—Should Dr Beattie obstinately decline their solicitations, it is more than an equal chance that the difficulty which they find in perfecting their noble plan, may lead them insensibly to accept of the most powerful recommendations, and thus suffer things to go on in the easiest way: thus things will turn into a corrupted channel. Should a man of mean abilities, or of dubious principles, fill the chair which Dr Beattie might have filled, *who* must answer for the good which such a person does not, or for the ill which he may do?

"I wish that Dr Beattie could be brought to see this in the strong light in which I see it. There are many things which might be said, and which are not fit for a letter; many things which, at present, cannot be spoken. It may be supposed, that Dr Beattie imagines that his works have procured him enemies, and that those enemies will be more formidable in Edinburgh than in Aberdeen. But surely he will not find those enemies among the members of the university. I could insure him against *that* for a very moderate premium. If they that are against him are more

than they that are for him, I have no more to say.

"He knows, that he and I differed as to some particulars, and that I thought something might have been taken from the edge of his style, yet so as to leave it the power of cutting deep enough. But that is a matter of taste and opinion. They, who have felt the sharpness of his weapon, will not provoke it.

"If he is affected with obloquy, I wish he were a judge for six months, and then he would find, that unless a man can have patience to contemn the gainsayers, he will have little comfort in the plain path of duty."

## LETTER LXXVI.

### LORD HAILES TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

New Hailes, 16th April, 1774.

"Since I had the pleasure of seeing you, I have a letter from London, mentioning Lord Mansfield's zeal for Dr Beattie. I do not consider myself at liberty to mention who my correspondent is; he is a man not much given to ap-

plaud indiscriminately, and one who thinks highly of Dr Beattie.

"The more that I think of this affair, the more I am persuaded that Dr Beattie's terrors are panic. I impute them to bad health and a vegetable diet. My poor old friend, Dr M'Kenzie of Drumsheugh, imputed the errors of the later Platonists to that ascetic diet.

"If Dr Beattie would consider, that in his lectures he is to unfold a system of truth, and that he may confute all the nonsense and irreligion that has appeared since the days of Cain even unto our days, without ever mentioning the name of any theorist or sceptic, he will not consider the intended station as so formidable.

"Should he dislike his office, he may leave it; he will always find a decent retirement into some sequestered recess of literature.

"I am not sure that it is a very Christian sentiment, yet I must say, that a rebuff at this time will be very discouraging, especially when we ourselves have the ball at our foot. If the friends of religion, and they who consider the value of religious education, are to have no aid where that might be expected, what is to come next? If

Dr Beattie shrinks, will not every man of ability shrink too?"

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To these communications from Lord Hailes, which I expected would have produced some effect in making him yield to the solicitation of his friends, I had the mortification, however, of receiving the following copious reply.

## LETTER LXXVII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 19th April, 1774.

"I have just received your two letters of the 16th current, inclosing two from Lord Hailes to you, which, according to your desire, I return under this cover. I cannot sufficiently thank you, or his lordship, for your zealous good wishes, and for the very favourable opinion you and he are pleased to entertain of me. As I desire nothing more earnestly, than to secure the con-

tinuance of that favourable opinion, I must beg leave to be somewhat particular in answering two accusations, which, from two passages of his lordship's letter, I have reason to fear are likely to be brought against me, even by my friends. It is insinuated, that my disinclination to resign my present employment, may be the effect of *obstinacy*, or of *fear*.

"Now, I humbly think, that when a man's conduct, and the reasons of it, are approved by a very great majority of those who are acquainted with both, it would be rather hard to charge him with *obstinacy*, for adhering to such conduct. And most certain it is, that, by all my English friends to whom I have had occasion to explain the affair in question, and by many respectable friends in Scotland, this conduct of mine, and the reasons of it, have been highly approved. Another thing, too, on this head, deserves attention. A man should not be accused of obstinacy, till he have told *all* his reasons, and till it appear that they are *all* unsatisfactory. I have never told *all* my reasons: I have told those only which are of a less private nature: other reasons I could specify; but they are of such a sort, that

I should think it petulance to obtrude them on the public.

"To the second accusation, I know not whether I can decently reply. When I see a man solicitous to prove that he is sober, I generally take it for granted, that he is drunk; and when one is at pains to convince me that he is brave, I am apt to set him down for a coward. Whether I deserve to be considered as a timorous asserter of good principles, I leave the world to judge, from what I have written, and from what I have done and said on occasions innumerable. Many hundreds in Great Britain, and some too elsewhere, think, that no Scottish writer, in my time, has attacked the enemies of truth with less reserve, and confuted them more zealously, than I have done. I have declared, in a printed book, which bears my name, that I detest their principles, and despise their talents; and that very book is, in the opinion of many, a proof that I have no reason to retract the declaration. What I have avowed, I am still ready to avow, in the face of any man upon earth, or of any number of men; and I shall never cease to avow, in plain language, and without concealment or subterfuge, so long as the Deity is pleased to continue with me the

use of my faculties. I cannot think that my friends will treat me so hardly, as to give out, that I fear every thing which I dislike. I dislike the croaking of frogs, and the barking of curs; but I fear neither. I dislike the conversation of infidels; but I know not in what sense I can be said to fear it. I should dislike very much to live in a society with crafty persons, who would think it for their interest to give me as much trouble as possible, unless I had reason to think, that they had conscience and honour sufficient to restrain them from aspersing the innocent; yet, if my duty were to call me thither, I should not be in the least afraid to live in such a society; for I know, that, while an honest man does his duty, the world seldom fails to do him justice. As to *obloquy*, I have had a share of it, as large as any private man I know; and I think I have borne it, and can bear it, with a degree of fortitude, of which I should not need to be ashamed, even if my station were as public, and as important, as that of a judge. Every honest man, whether his station be public or private, will do his duty without minding obloquy, which, in fact, was never more harmless than at present, because it never was more common. Convince me

that it is my duty to remove from hence to Edinburgh, and you shall see me set out immediately, as regardless of the snarling of my enemies there, as of that of the curs, who might snap at my heels by the way. So very little ground is there for suspecting me of an inclination to *shrink* from my principles, that one chief reason which determines my present choice is, that I may have the more leisure to apply myself to those studies, which may tend to the further confutation of error, and illustration of truth: so that, if they think I have any talents in this way, and if they know what my present resolutions are, my adversaries would wish me rather in Edinburgh, where I should have but little leisure, than at Aberdeen, where I have a great deal. On this account, as well as on others, I am morally certain, that I shall have it in my power to do more good to society by remaining where I am, than by moving to Edinburgh.

"That I am entirely useless in my present profession, is not the opinion of those in this country, who have access to know how I employ myself. My lectures are not confined to my own class. I do what no other professor here ever did, and what no professor in any other part of Great Bri-

tain can do; I admit, together with my own students in moral philosophy, all the divinity students of two universities, who are willing to attend me; and I have often a very crowded auditory; and I receive fees from nobody, but from such of my own private class as are able to pay them. Nobody ever asked me to do this, and nobody thanks me for it, except the young men themselves; and yet, in all this there is so little merit, it being as easy for me to lecture to a hundred as to thirty, that I should not have thought it worth mentioning, except with a view to obviate an objection, that seems to be implied in some things, that have been thrown out at this time.

" So much for my duties to the public, to which, I would fain hope, it will be found, that I am not quite insensible. But, according to my notions of morality, there are also duties which a man owes to his family, and to himself: nor is it, in my opinion, incumbent on any man to overlook the latter, merely because it is possible, that, by so doing, he might discharge the former more effectually. I do not think it the duty of any particular Christian, of you, for instance, or Mr Arbuthnot, or myself, to relinquish his family,

friends, and country, and to attempt the conversion of the Indians; and yet, it is not absolutely impossible, but that, by so doing, he might perform a great deal of good. My health and quiet may be of little consequence to the public, but they are of very considerable consequence to me, and to those who depend upon me; and I am certain, that I shall have a much better chance of securing both, by staying where I am, than by removing to Edinburgh. Dr Gregory was of this opinion: I can show his hand-writing for it; and this is the opinion of many others. I have more reasons than the world knows of, to wish to pass the latter part of my days in quiet; and the more quiet, and the more health I enjoy, the more I shall have it in my power to exert myself in the service of the public.

"To what Lord Hailes adds, in the conclusion of his letter, about my leaving the office in question, if I found it disagreeable, in the hopes of finding some decent retirement elsewhere, I make no reply: I only say, that I wonder at it. I wish there were more foundation for his humourous conjecture about my food: If I could eat vegetables, I should think myself a great man; but,

alas! the state of my health is such, that I dare not indulge myself in that wholesome diet.

"I hope his lordship will now be convinced, that I am neither whimsical nor timorous in this affair. The reasons I have specified, have been admitted as valid by many persons, whose judgement in other matters he would allow to be good, if I were to name them; which I would do, without scruple, if I thought it necessary.

"I shall only add, what you, my dear friend, know to be a truth, and what I can bring the fullest evidence to prove, that my present disinclination to an Edinburgh professorship is not the consequence of any late favourable change in my circumstances. The very same disinclination I shewed, and the same reasons I urged, more than two years ago, when I had no prospect of such a favourable change.

"To conclude; every principle of public and private duty forbids me to comply with this kind solicitation of my friends; and I will add, that nothing but a regard to duty could have determined me to resist so kind a solicitation. I am certain, the city of Edinburgh can find no difficulty in procuring an abler professor than I am. I heartily wish it may ever flourish in learning,

and in every useful and honourable art; and I shall ever retain a most grateful sense of the honour which so many of its inhabitants have done me, on this occasion.

"I ask pardon for not answering your letter sooner. My health is just now in such a state, (the confinement, occasioned by my broken arm, having brought back many of my old complaints,) that I am not able to write more than a few sentences at a time, without suffering for it.

"I have not said a word on the subject of interest. It is evident to me, and I think I could prove to your satisfaction, that the change, now proposed, would be detrimental in that respect. But this consideration should not deter me from making the change, if my duty required me to make it. And yet, even if I were to pay *some* attention to interest in an affair of this kind, I do not believe that the world in general would blame me, considering that I have others to provide for, besides myself. It may be said, indeed, that, having already gotten as much as might support me independently on my office, which is more than I deserve, I have no right to extend my views to interest any further. I admit the fact; but I deny the inference, in which I will

not believe any man to be serious, till he show me, by his own conduct, that he thinks it valid.

"The reasons I have here specified, I wish to be as generally known, in and about Edinburgh, as you may think necessary, for the vindication of my character."

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This letter was inclosed in the following.

## LETTER LXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 23d April, 1774.

"The long letter, inclosed, you are to consider as an answer, not to yours, but to those of Lord Hailes to you. I know, not only the goodness, but the generosity and gentleness of your heart; and, I am sure, you would never wish me to do a thing disagreeable to me, if I could, with a clear conscience, avoid it. Our learned and wor-

thy friend seems to think, that my interest and gratification ought to be entirely out of the question; in this, I know, you will differ from him, as well as in some insinuations touching my character, which, I confess, pique me a little. But this *entre nous.* I have the greatest regard for him, notwithstanding, on account of his learning and worth; and I am pretty certain he has a regard for me; but I thought it was best to speak plain, and put an end to the affair at once. Be assured, that I did not form my present resolution without very good reason."

---

It was obviously Dr Beattie's intention, that I should transmit this letter to Lord Hailes, as containing a full statement of our friend's determination, and of his reasons for it. But I confess, the letter did not altogether please me. I thought it written in a tone somewhat too peremptory, in reply to so well-meant a communication. On consulting with two of our most intimate friends,

who entirely agreed with me in my opinion of the letter, I resolved not to send it to Lord Hailes, but rather to copy out some paragraphs from it, which I transmitted to him. At the same time, I thought it right to send to Dr Beattie an exact copy of what I had thus written. The following letters, which I received in reply, closed the correspondence on the subject.

## LETTER LXXIX.

LORD HAILES TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

New Hailes, 29th April, 1774.

"I am sorry to see that Dr Beattie is so resolved: I do not see that more can be said; he seems to be dissatisfied with something that you and I have said, I am sure without reason. *Who* the people are, whose judgment I would think good in other matters, and who have confirmed him in his resolutions, I know not, nor can I venture to guess: I possibly suspect one, of whose sound head, and distinguished abilities, I have a just sense; but he and I do not always think in

the same way. I could mention men, well known in the literary world, dead and alive, who thought and think very differently from some of the Doctor's friends, but I have my reasons for being silent as to names. Since this affair has taken so unfortunate a turn, you and I have done what we thought right, Dr Beattie has done what he thought right, and there is no more to be said; I hope, that all will be for the best.

"When you write to Dr Beattie, please assure him, in the warmest manner, of my good wishes and regard."

## LETTER LXXX.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 8th May, 1774.

"I have this moment received your packet, which I shall answer, at some length, hereafter. In the meantime, I take the opportunity to tell you, by the return of the post, that your conduct, in the whole of this business, is prudent, benevolent, and friendly. I beg, therefore, you may

make your mind perfectly easy on that head. Show this letter to Mr Arbuthnot."*

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As I wished to show at once the whole of the correspondence respecting the Edinburgh professorship, in order that what passed on that occasion may be the more distinctly known, I delayed to insert the following letters, which were written in the interval, between the two periods of that correspondence.

* In this letter, which was ostensible, I found inclosed a slip of paper, on which he had written to me the following most affectionate note:

"I cannot help telling you on this scrap, that I could have wished you had been entirely determined by your own judgement, in the affair of the letter. Not that there was any harm in consulting those two friends, whom nobody on earth can honour more than I do; but because I wish you to believe, that your opinion alone is at any time sufficient authority with me, for the propriety of any measure you may be pleased to recommend. There is not a thought of my heart, which I wish to conceal from you; and I have been long accustomed to lay my mind open to you, with less reserve, than to any body else; indeed, without any sort of reserve at all. It may, therefore, sometimes happen, that I shall write to you, what I would not wish any body else to read."

## LETTER LXXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 18th December, 1773.

"My studies proceed so slowly, that I can hardly be said to study at all; which, after what I have told you, will not appear surprising. I have, however, added largely to my discourse on classical learning, and have been looking out for materials towards the finishing of my other little essays. If the subscription-affair succeed, I hope I shall have every thing in readiness in due time. I understand, by a letter from Mr Gregory to one of his friends here, that he has been obliged to lay aside the scheme of publishing his father's works in one volume; two of the treatises being (it seems) the property of Dodsley the bookseller: this has made me postpone, to a time of more leisure, what I intended to write on the subject of the doctor's character. I knew that Mr Gregory* would please you: he is, indeed,

* Dr James Gregory, (eldest son of the late Dr John Gregory,) a physician of the first eminence, at present, in Edinburgh, and

an excellent young man; I know not whether I ever have met with one of his years, whose heart was so good, or whose understanding was so thoroughly improved.

"I had the honour of a letter, lately, from the Duchess of Portland, which I will answer soon. Mrs Delany's misfortune gave great concern to Mrs Beattie and me; but as you mention nothing of it, we are satisfied that the danger is now over.

"It gives me pleasure to hear, that your nephew finds Edinburgh so much to his mind. Mr Arbuthnot will do every thing in his power to make it agreeable to him. To the soundest principles, and to the best heart, to a very extensive knowledge both of men and books, and to great

who fills the chair of *Professor of the Practice of Physic* in that university, with such distinguished ability. From a youth, he enjoyed the friendship of Dr Beattie, as it were by hereditary right: and at all times endeavoured, by his medical skill, to contribute to the restoration of the health of one who had been so dear to his father, and whom he himself so highly esteemed and respected. The elegant and classical inscription, for Dr Beattie's monument at Aberdeen, which will be found hereafter, is of Dr Gregory's composition. I have already mentioned† the intimate friendship with which the late Dr Gregory honoured me, and I am proud to boast of its continuance with his son.

† Vol. I. p. 41.

delicacy and correctness of taste, Mr Arbuthnot joins a vein of pleasantry and good humour, peculiar to himself, which renders his conversation equally agreeable and instructive. His character, in many particulars, resembles that of his namesake and near relation, the famous Dr John Arbuthnot; but my friend has none of those singularities of manner, which sometimes rendered his great kinsman somewhat ridiculous. I am convinced that your nephew and he will be mutually agreeable to each other; and as Mr Arbuthnot is well acquainted with every body in Edinburgh, he is one of the properest persons there to give advice to the other, in regard to his company. I shall write to Mr Arbuthnot in a few days, and tell him what you say of him, which, I know, will make him very happy.*

"I know not, whether, in a former letter, I did not give you some account of an offer I lately had, from some of the town-council of Edinburgh, of their interest of bringing me into that university, in which, at present, there is a professorship vacant. I thanked them in the best

* Vol. I. p. 34.

manner I could; but, for several reasons, some of which I specified to them, and with all of which you are well acquainted, I begged leave to decline the offer.

"Yesterday's post brought me a letter from the Archbishop of York: It is more than friendly, it is an affectionate letter. His Grace had written to me soon after my return to Scotland, to congratulate me on my late success; and, by a very delicate hint, he gave me an opportunity of explaining, whether I would now confine my future views to this country, or make any further efforts to rise higher in the world. My answer to that part of his Grace's letter was to the following purpose:

"That my late success was greater than I had any reason either to expect or wish for; that I considered myself as rewarded beyond my deservings; that the provision, now made for me, was sufficient to procure for me, at Aberdeen, every convenience of life which I had any right to aspire after; that I had neither spirits nor bodily health to qualify me for a life of bustle and anxiety; and that I might, perhaps, be as useful in my present station as in any other; that, therefore, to give my friends any farther trouble in se-

conding my views, would, in my judgment, be to presume too far upon their generosity, and my own merit. The Archbishop approves highly of these sentiments. "Your resolution (says he) "to employ your time and endeavours to pro- "mote the cause of truth, and your content to "remain in Scotland with your present provi- "sions, is worthy of you; *** and though your "entry into our church would have been a hap- "py acquisition to it, yet I cannot but applaud "your determination."

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At the time when Dr Beattie went to London, in the year 1773, and when it was very uncertain whether he might ever receive any substantial mark of his Majesty's royal approbation, his friends in London, seeing how much he and his family stood in need of some farther emolument, than what merely arose from his professorship, projected a scheme of publishing there, by subscription, an edition of his "Essay on Truth," by which, it was hoped, a considerable sum might be raised. It was by no means intended to ad-

vertise it publicly; but merely to conduct it privately, by means of a few of his particular friends, Lady Mayne, Mrs Montagu, Dr Porteus, and a few others, whose extensive circle of acquaintance might give them an opportunity of procuring a large number of subscriptions. A mode this, which, it was thought, could neither be construed into indelicacy towards him, nor the public. The book did not make its appearance until the year 1776, as I shall have occasion to mention hereafter. But as the matter of the subscription became pretty generally known, and had been differently thought of by some of his friends, the inclosed letter to Lady Mayne* sets the matter in its proper point of view.

* The Honourable Frances Allen, daughter and co-heiress of Joshua Lord Viscount Allen, Lady of Sir William Mayne, Bart. afterwards created Lord Newhaven, from both of whom Dr Beattie experienced the strongest marks of friendly and polite attention.

## LETTER LXXXII.

### DR BEATTIE TO LADY MAYNE.

Aberdeen, 2d January, 1774.

"Of my worthy and generous friend, Dr Majendie, I know not what to say. I must leave it to your Ladyship to tell him, for no words of mine have energy enough, with what gratitude, affection, and esteem, I do, and ever shall, remember him. The sentiments which his royal mistress * has been pleased to express, in regard to my affairs, do me the greatest honour; and I should be unworthy of them, if they did not give me the greatest pleasure. It is peculiarly fortunate, that her M——y should honour the subscription with her approbation. This may exclude, from a certain quarter, those misrepresentations of this affair, which, I have reason to think, are already circulating, very much to the prejudice of my character. I was, indeed, somewhat apprehensive, from the beginning, that my ene-

* Vol. I. p. 337.

mies might tax me with avarice and impudence. But your Ladyship and Mrs Montagu concerted the scheme in such a manner, that, if it is rightly understood, it must redound, even in the judgement of my enemies themselves, still more to my honour, than it can to my interest. And of this I lately endeavoured to satisfy a friend of mine in England, a gentleman eminent in the literary world, who, on hearing some imperfect account of a subscription, wrote me a letter, urging me, in the most earnest manner, as I valued my character, to put a stop to it. I gave him, in return, as plain an account as, without naming names, could be given, of the rise and progress of the affair. I told him, "that it was a thing "of a private nature entirely; projected, not by "me, but by some of my friends, who had con- "descended to charge themselves with the whole "trouble of it; that it was never meant to be "made public, nor put into the hands of book- "sellers, nor carried on by solicitation, but was "to be considered as a *voluntary* mark of the ap- "probation of some persons of rank and fortune, "who wished it to be known, that they patron- "ized me on account of what I had written in "defence of truth; and that I was so far from

"desiring to put the patience or generosity of "my friends to any further trial, that I had re- "peatedly protested, and did still protest, that "I was fully satisfied with the provision which, "by his Majesty's bounty, I now enjoy, which "was equal to my wishes, and far superior, in "my opinion, to my deservings." I told him, further, "that, considering the nature of this "subscription, and the high character of the per- "sons who had proposed it, I could not have re- "fused my consent, without giving myself airs, "which would have very ill become me:" and I added, "that while the subscription, by remain- "ing in suspense, was liable to be misunder- "stood, I trusted to my friends for the vindica- "tion of my conduct; but that, if ever the in- "tended volume came to be published, I should "take care to do justice, in a preface, both to "them and to myself, by stating the matter fair- "ly to the public." This information will, I hope, satisfy the gentleman, that the subscription is not, as he was made to believe, *disgraceful to my character*, (these are his words,) but, on the contrary, highly creditable to it, and honourable. However, that it may never be in the power, even of malice itself, to lay any thing to my charge

on this score, I would humbly propose, that no entreaty should be used to draw in subscribers, and that they, who make objections, should never be addressed a second time on the subject."

## LETTER LXXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 8th January, 1774.

"Since I left London, Mr Hume's friends have been contriving a new method to blacken my character. I have been written to upon the subject, and desired to vindicate myself; as the utmost industry is used, even by some people of name, to circulate the malicious report.

"The charge against me, as stated in my correspondent's letter, is word for word as follows: I am accused of rancour and ingratitude to Mr Hume; "for (say they) Mr Hume was very in-"strumental in procuring for me the professor-"ship I now hold at Aberdeen, and kept up a "friendly correspondence with me for some time; "till at length I sent him a poem of mine (which "was never printed:) but Mr Hume not liking

" it, and being frank in his nature, sent me word, " it was as insipid as milk and water; upon which, " bent on revenge, I immediately set about my " Essay on Truth, which is full of virulence and " misquotation."

" You may believe, that an accusation of this sort, in which, *you know*, I can prove there is not one single word of truth, cannot give me much pain. But I should be glad, that Mr Hume, for his own sake, would disavow it; and indeed I cannot suppose, that he is so destitute of candour, as to give countenance to a report, which he himself certainly knows to be altogether false."

## LETTER LXXXIV.

### SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS TO DR BEATTIE.

London, 22d February, 1774.

" I sit down to relieve my mind from great anxiety and uneasiness, and I am very serious when I say, that this proceeds from not answering your letter sooner. This seems very strange, you will say, since the cause may be so easily removed; but the truth of the matter is, I waited

to be able to inform you that your picture was finished, which, however, I cannot now do. I must confess to you, that when I sat down, I did intend to tell a sort of a white lie, that it was finished: but, on recollecting that I was writing to the author of truth, about a picture of truth, I ought to say nothing but truth. The truth then is, that the picture probably will be finished before you receive this letter; for there is not above a day's work remaining to be done. Mr Hume has heard from somebody, that he is introduced in the picture, not much to his credit; there is only a figure, covering his face with his hands, which they may call Hume, or any body else; it is true it has a tolerable broad back. As for Voltaire, I intended he should be one of the group.

"I intended to write more, but I hear the postman's bell. Dr Johnson, who is with me now, desires his compliments."

## LETTER LXXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 13th March, 1774.

"The second book of the 'Minstrel,' (which Mr Fred. Montagu permits me to send under his cover,) will be delivered to you, along with this; and I must give you the trouble to keep it till Mr Dilly call for it. You were very indulgent to that part of it which you read last summer, in which I have made no very material alterations. I am impatient to know your opinion of the other part, and particularly of the conclusion, which I do not like the better for its being on a new plan, but to which I cannot help being partial, for the sake of the subject. You will see that the blank is to be filled up with the name of Gregory; a name which I forbear to write at length, till I see whether the public opinion will be so favourable, as to justify my taking that liberty with so dear and so respectable a friend. The lines relating to him were written (as I think I told you before) immediately after I received the melancholy

news of his death; when my mind was oppressed with a weight of sorrow, which I did not, and which I needed not, attempt to exaggerate in the description. His friendship was for many years a never-failing source of consolation to me, in all my distresses; and he was taken from me at a time when my health was very bad, and my spirits in a most dejected condition. I had a letter from Mr Gregory, a few days ago, inclosing a copy of 'The Father's Legacy.' I read it several years ago, in manuscript, and I then told the Doctor, that I looked upon it as the most elegant of all his compositions.

"You are right in conjecture, in regard to Dr ——. He had, it seems, heard some account of a subscription, and wrote of it to Mr —— of ——, whose letter to me was in these words: "I take the liberty to trouble you with this line, "merely to mention a thing, which my friend, "Dr ——, out of pure good will to you, advises "me to mention. He writes me word, that he "hears, on good authority, a subscription has "been set on foot, and is soliciting, for your "'Minstrel,' (as well the new, as the old part.) "This way of publishing it, he thinks (and I "heartily concur with him) will be thought un-

"worthy of your character, and will certainly "disgust your best friends. I take it for granted, if the story is true, you have acquiesced in "the thing, at the instance of some friend, who "did not feel that this method of publishing has "so mean an appearance, as it really at present "has. I would, therefore, advise you, by all "means, to stop the progress of the affair, as "soon as possible; for I really think, it will be "highly disgraceful to a person of your confest "abilities, if it proceeds," &c. I returned Mr —— an answer in course, and told him, that Dr —— had been misinformed in regard to the 'Minstrel,' but that there actually was on foot a subscription of another sort, of which I gave him that account, which I afterwards sent to Lady Mayne, in that letter which you read. This happened about three months ago; and I have not heard from Mr —— since; from which I know not whether to draw a favourable, or an unfavourable inference.

"Pray, madam, be so good as to favour me with some account of the Bishop of Carlisle, Dr Law, if he happens to be of your acquaintance. His Lordship (in a book lately published) has

been pleased to attack me in a strange manner,* though in few words, and very superciliously seems to condemn my whole book; "because I "believe in the identity of the human soul, and "that there are innate powers, and implanted in- "stincts in our nature." He hints, too, at my being a native of Scotland, and imputes my *unnatural way* of reasoning, (for so he characterises it,) to my ignorance of what has been written on the other side of the question, by some late authors. It would be a very easy matter for me to return such an answer to his Lordship, as would satisfy the world, that he has been rather hasty in signing my condemnation; but perhaps it will be better to take no notice of it: I shall be determined by your advice. His doctrine is, that the human soul forfeited its immortality by the fall, but regained it in consequence of the merits of Jesus Christ, and that it cannot exist without the body; and must, therefore, in the interval between death and the resurrection, remain in a state of non-existence. The theory is not a new one; but his Lordship seems to be one of the

* Considerations on the Theory of Religion, by Edmund, Lord Bishop of Carlisle, p. 431.

most sanguine of its adherents. Some of the objections, drawn from the scripture, he gets the better of by a mode of criticism, which, I humbly think, would not be admitted in a commentary upon any other book.

"I must now beg leave to put you in mind, that I have a claim on you, for an essay to my quarto volume; for I wish to have in it something new, that is really worth the money to be paid for it. I ground my claim upon a promise, which, I think, you were pleased to make me at Sandleford. Such a contribution will give you no trouble; and to me, considering how poorly provided I am for furnishing out a whole quarto, it will be an act of the greatest charity. The hope of it will be a spur to my industry; for though it is impossible for me to provide for it suitable accommodation, I shall, however, bestir myself in decking and garnishing the rest of the volume for its reception. Since I have been in this state of confinement, I have amused myself in collecting materials for finishing an 'Essay on Laughter,' which I sketched out about ten years ago. I intend that it shall be one of my additional essays: it is a grave philosophical enquiry into the nature of those objects that provoke

laughter, with critical remarks on the different sorts of ludicrous composition, and an attempt to account for the superiority of the moderns over the ancients, in the articles of wit and humour. I have written fifty pages, and shall have nearly as many more to write. When I have finished the first draught, I will have it transcribed, and sent to you."

## LETTER LXXXVI.

### LADY MAYNE TO DR BEATTIE.

St James's Square, London, April 18th, 1774.

"I believe it is unnecessary to say, how much pleasure I have received, in reading over and over the second part of your delightful poem, which, I find, meets with the universal approbation it deserves; and all those, to whom you was so obliging as to send copies, through me, join with Sir William and me, in a great many thanks, for so agreeable a present.

"Mr John Pitt,* of Arlington-street, has de-

* The same gentleman who so kindly accommodated Dr Beattie with the use of his post-chaise at Oxford. Vol. I. p. 345.

sired me to make a proposal to you, which, whether it be agreeable to you or not, will be, I am sure, considered by you as a real proof of his friendship and esteem. It is, that in case you should have resolved to follow the advice of some of your friends, with regard to taking orders in our church, he has a living in his neighbourhood in Dorsetshire, likely to be very soon vacant, which he will not dispose of till he knows your mind. I believe Sir William and I know it pretty well; but, as it did not become me to answer for you, I have only undertaken to obtain your own, which he begs may be as soon as possible, because he has a number of applications for it, though the yearly value is only a hundred and fifty pounds. You will, I dare say, judge it proper to write to him yourself upon the occasion.

"He is a man of most uncommon goodness of heart; he and his charming wife are well-deserving of each other. They both, in the beginning of this winter, proposed a plan, for a society of well-disposed persons, to raise a fund by voluntary subscription, for the relief of distressed and deserving objects. The society soon became very numerous, as well as rich, and consists of several of the highest rank, and most eminent virtue,

besides others who wish to imitate such good examples.

"Some very honest judicious people are kept in pay, to enquire and examine strictly into the true state of all such objects as send in petitions, and a committee of thirty meet every Saturday morning, to consider the reports of these enquirers, and to order suitable relief; besides which, the whole body of subscribers, to the amount of five guineas and upwards, have a general meeting every Wednesday evening, to form general rules and regulations, and consult upon any extraordinary cases that may offer. Besides this committee, there is another chosen, consisting of six ladies, and a seventh called the treasurer, whose department it is to employ poor women in work, who are industrious, but deprived of employment. I dare say it will immediately strike you, that such an unlimited plan must soon become impracticable, in such a town as this is, from the infinity of business that would multiply daily: and so it has proved. We therefore, about a month ago, found ourselves obliged to confine ourselves to the residents in five parishes; St James's, St George's, St Ann's, St Martin's, and Marybone. This gave a little relief for some

time; but now, as might well be expected, the poor are all establishing themselves within these limits, so that, I greatly fear, this most excellent scheme cannot hold out long, at least upon its present footing. However, the zeal that the greatest number of the subscribers manifest, and the indefatigable pains, as well as time, that they employ this way, in spite of all the allurements of pleasure and dissipation that surround them, make me hope, that experience will open the way to some effectual and durable method of doing all the good they wish, both in the way of relief and detection. 'Lady Charlotte Finch, and her two daughters, her sister, Lady Juliana Penn, Lady Spencer, Lady Erskine, Lord and Lady Dartree, Lady Dartmouth, your friend Mr Hawkins Browne, the Duchess of Northumberland, Lord and Lady Willoughby, Miss Cowper, Miss Proby, Mrs Eliz. Carter, and a very great number besides, give up the greatest part of their time and thoughts to this business, to such a degree, that some have suffered in their health by it.

"Who would have expected, some time ago, to be so edified in the year 1774, in contemplating the occupations of one of the first and most

numerous societies in the environs of St James's? I know this will give double satisfaction to you, as it tends to confirm your system of *innate* goodness; for I am sure the greatest part of this society did not acquire theirs, either by prejudices of education, or by the London habits, in which they were early initiated. I dare say it would give you the greatest satisfaction to attend at any of these weekly meetings, where you would see so many amiable people, attentive, for several hours together, to the sole purpose of trying to alleviate the distresses of their fellow-creatures."

## LETTER LXXXVII.

### DR BEATTIE TO LADY MAYNE.

Aberdeen, 20th May, 1774.

"I have enclosed an answer to Mr John Pitt's very kind offer, which you will be so good as to forward. I thank him for his generosity, of which, indeed, I have a very affecting sense: but I tell him, that, by the advice of my best

friends, I have given up all thoughts of entering into the church, many months ago.

"I am much obliged to you, madam, for your agreeable account of the charitable society, lately established in the neighbourhood of St James's. It is, as you observe, an honour to my theory of virtue: but, what gives me much more pleasure, (theorist as I am,) it does honour also to the virtue and good sense of the age, it does honour to human nature. I do not know any thing more desirable, nor more difficult, than to lay down, and carry into execution, a proper plan for the relief of the poor, which, without encouraging idleness or vice, shall administer real comfort to the helpless and the needy. The provision, established by your poor's rate in England, is indeed very ample, nay, in some places so exorbitant, that I should think nothing could flourish in those places, but poverty. I have heard of eight, ten, nay, even fourteen shillings in the pound, paid, in some parishes, to the poor's rate, which, added to the land-tax, would seem to make the land-holder the poorest man in the district. There must be some grievous mismanagement, both in the exaction and application of such sums; and it were most devoutly to be wished, that the le-

gislature would endeavour to provide a remedy for so enormous an evil. Till this be done, all that individuals can in prudence do, is to enquire into, and relieve the necessities of those poor, who live in their neighbourhood, and with whose circumstances they are well acquainted, either from personal knowledge, or undoubted information. Were this done in all parts of the kingdom, the poor would be better supplied than by any legal provision, how great soever; and begging, as a trade, would be at an end; and nothing can be more praise-worthy, than for persons of rank and fortune to set the example of so benevolent an institution.

"A Prince of Liege, in order to cancel all at once the wrong side of his spiritual account, bequeathed, on his death-bed, his whole fortune, which was very large, to the poor, appointing the Magistrates of Liege his administrators. The consequence is, that of all the beggars and vagabonds in the Netherlands, Liege is now the common receptacle. It is no uncommon thing for an army of five or six thousand of these people to invest the house of the chief magistrate, and threaten to extirpate him, and all his generation, with fire and sword, if he does not instantly make a pecu-

niary distribution. The gentleman from whom I have this account, and who is a person of sense and veracity, resided some time in Liege, and, to give an idea of the multitude of beggars that swarm in the streets of that town, told me further, that one day, in walking half a mile, he gave away, to professed beggars, not less than fifty-eight pieces of money. I need not tell your Ladyship what inferences are to be drawn from this story."

## LETTER LXXXVIII.*

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Sandleford, 21st June, 1773.

"My health is greatly improved since I came hither, and I shall be able to enjoy the pleasure of the Duchess of Portland's conversation, and the charms of Bullstrode. I had the honour and happiness of passing many of my youthful days in that society, and that place; so that I feel a

* The following seven letters ought to have been inserted at their proper dates. I prefer giving them in this manner to the reader, rather than withhold them altogether.

more tender and sincere joy when I return to it, than I find any where else. The Duchess does honour to her sex, and to her rank; peculiar purity and dignity have distinguished her through every stage of life. Her example, as a daughter, a wife, a mother, have not been excelled by any one; as a lady of the highest birth, rank, and fortune, it has not been equalled. Her humility, benevolence, and generosity, give an amiableness to her whole conduct, and make every one round her happy.

"I long to see you here. I had yesterday thirty-six hay-makers, and their children, at dinner, in a grove in the garden. When they work in my sight, I love to see that they eat as well as labour, and often send them a treat, to which they bring an appetite that gives a better relish than the Madeira wine, and Cayenne pepper, in which the alderman stews his turtle. You would have enjoyed the sight of this feast; to which temperance was steward, frugality cook, and hunger the guest."

## LETTER LXXXIX.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

August 23d, 1773.

"While my imagination was delighting itself, in painting you in all the florid colours, and utmost glow of prosperity and joy, you were, in fact, languishing on a sick bed! What a poor "limitary cherub"* is our "divine Alma!" ignorant of all things that do not pass in her presence, and often deceived in those that do! I flatter myself, that the fresh air, and tranquillity of this place, will soon restore your strength and spirits.

"I am delighted with Sir Joshua Reynolds' plan, and do not doubt but he will make a very noble picture of it. I class Sir Joshua with the greatest genius's that have ever appeared in the art of painting; and I wish he was employed by the public, in some great work, that would do honour to our country in future ages. He has the spirit of a Grecian artist. The Athenians

* Milton.

did not employ such men in painting portraits to place over a chimney, or the door of a private cabinet. I long to see the picture he is now designing; virtue and truth are subjects worthy of the artist and the man. He has an excellent moral character, and is most pleasing and amiable in society; and, with great talents, has uncommon humility and gentleness."

## LETTER XC.

REV. DR MAJENDIE TO DR BEATTIE.

Kew-Green, October 19th, 1773.

"As soon as your favour of the 10th September last, and the copies attending it, reached me here, I failed not immediately to make use of the whole, as it had been agreed upon between us. The two copies of your 'Minstrel' were most graciously received by their Majesties, and your letter of the above date read through by both with apparent satisfaction: and no wonder, as a vein of propriety, good sense, and manly gratitude, is so conspicuous in every part of it. May you, good Sir, long enjoy the pleasure arising

from such feelings, and ever have the additional one, of disseminating them all around you. This I know to be your fixed purpose; a nobler one you cannot have in view. May every circumstance in life concur to crown it with success.

"Your 'Minstrel' (for a very neat copy of which I have now to thank you) I have read with much satisfaction. As far as I am able to judge of this kind of composition, it seems adequate to the subject; the verse flowing easily, and unaffectedly; the sentiments of the young hero of the piece, such as unvitiated nature suggests; and your descriptions, in many places, truly poetical and sublime. Your stanzas XL, and XLI, are happily brought in, well executed. So deserved a stricture upon the grovelling Pyrrhonians, and Epicureans, is worthy of the author of the 'Essay on Truth.' Pray go on with a subject you have so successfully begun. Let us soon see the good, the innocent, the guiltless Edwin (no more your own, since the time you have been pleased to show him to the public) proceeding through life as he has commenced it. Nothing can be a bar to his merits and happiness in the world, provided, *Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.* You, Sir, have fostered him

into the world. How can he miscarry, under so able a Mentor?"

## LETTER XCI.

### MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Sandleford, 31st October, 1773.

"I have just begun a posthumous work of the famous Helvetius, (who wrote a book called 'L'Esprit,' some years ago). It is astonishing to see how the understandings and language of the French are corrupted, since the time of Louis XIV. I am particularly provoked at one practice of theirs, which is, whenever they repeat an old, and long acknowledged truth, they endeavour to put it off as their own observation and discovery; and every *novel* fallacy, the offspring of their own brain, they introduce as a known and demonstrated argument, verified by experience. What a cheat should we account a shopkeeper, who put the sterling mark on his pewter, and having in his warehouse only three or four silver spoons and salts, omitted to mark them with the true indication of their value, and how

surprised would the customer be when he found he had prized most highly the baser metal!"

## LETTER XCII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

London, 4th April, 1774.

"I have for six different mornings intended writing to you, and as often have been disappointed, by persons, who, with very polite intentions of making me civil visits, robbed me of the hours I had destined to a more pleasing purpose. With great satisfaction I consigned your charming 'Minstrel' to Mr Dilly; it will soon come abroad, and, I have no doubt, meet with the highest approbation. You have added many fine stanzas since I saw it, and I like much the conclusion, though it does not belong to the subject. However, it is the sweetest office of the Minstrel, to sing the praise of a dear departed friend. A prose panegyric, like the cypress tree, does but with *lugubre* state shade the tomb; the Parnassian *Bay* adorns it, and gives it a sanctity, and throws the lustre of immortality around it. I

read with new pleasure, and new wonder, (and wonder is rarely repeated,) the felicity with which you have given the sweetest graces of poetry to the severest and gravest subjects. It does not surprise me to see garlands of roses bloom on the brow of youth, beauty, and pleasure; but to see them so gracefully adorn the hoary head of the legislator, and the pensive brow of the philosopher, shows the consummate address of the artist."

## LETTER XCIII.

MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

April 30th, 1774.

"I am ashamed that I have not conveyed to you the fame of your 'Minstrel,' which comes in the sweetest and the loudest notes to my ear every day. Indeed, it is surprising to find Edwin preserve his simplicity, his harmony, and his poetical imagination, in the school of philosophy, and in the din of society. The stanzas, dedicated to the memory of your friend, have drawn tears and sighs from all who have lost a friend, or have

one to lose; it is on insensibility alone that it does not make deep impression.

" I have not time to enter into any discussion of Dr Bryant's ' Analysis of Ancient Mythology,' Mr Warton's ' History of Poetry,' and Lord Chesterfield's ' Letters,' all which I have been reading. I must tell you, that Samuel Johnson says of Lord Chesterfield's ' Instructions to his Son,' that they are to teach the manners of a dancing-master, with the morals of a prostitute. The sentence is too severe, to be perfectly just; and the character too short, to be perfectly descriptive; but there is something too near truth, and too like description. One grieves that Lord Chesterfield's judgment and talents should have been misapplied in the important matter of forming a son's character; but more of this at our better leisure. Your portrait is in the exhibition; it is very like, and the piece worthy the pencil of Sir Joshua."

## LETTER XCIV.

REV. DR MAJENDIE TO DR BEATTIE.

Windsor, 26th April, 1774.

"It is with much pleasure, that I come now, though later than I could have wished, to give you an account of the reception your second book of the 'Minstrel' has met with. Dilly having given me notice that it was printed, and would be shortly published, I desired that he would use the utmost dispatch, that very day, which was last Tuesday, to get me two copies, as elegantly bound as so short a notice would permit, that I might be able to present them to their Majesties early next morning; as else the opportunity would be lost, I being obliged to be absent for three weeks. This request was accordingly complied with, and the books were presented to their Majesties, at a time they were both together. To a heart like yours, my dear sir, it must be no small satisfaction to be informed, that they were received with that same goodness, and affable condescension, which you experienced last

summer. Some observations were made upon your character and writings, that shewed how well they are able to appreciate men and things; and I was particularly ordered by the Queen, to let you know, that she truly values you.

"Having thus given you an account of my commission, I should be wanting both to you and myself, if I omit returning you thanks for your kind attention, in ordering me a copy of your second book of the 'Minstrel,' which I have read with the greatest satisfaction, and lent it to others here, who entertain the same notion of its moral and poetical merit as I do. May you long continue to be an ornament, a blessing to human nature, and to the age you live in!

"Transferred from a Prebend of Worcester to a Canonry here, by his Majesty's great goodness, I am now keeping my strict residence. I have brought down with me the last edition of your 'Essay,' &c. and given it a second reading. The whole pleases me more and more. I have been particularly delighted with the second chapter of Part III. The critical account you there give of Aristotle's Works, &c.; the fate of metaphysic from his time down to ours; the crafty and unfair method of our late sceptics handling the sub-

jects they undertake to write upon, which you have so fairly laid open; and the manly warmth with which you refute them; form together a masterpiece, by itself. It is such a one, in my humble opinion, as deserves the thanks, not only of the literati, but of all honest and good men. I am glad to hear, that the subscription to the quarto edition is likely to turn to account. I have not been wanting, on my part, to promote it, as far as my little power and influence could reach. To Lady Mayne, and Mrs Montagu, you are greatly obliged on this occasion, there is no doubt of it. However, to your merit, as a champion in the cause of truth, is chiefly owing the success it met with; which gives me so much the more pleasure, as it affords a proof, that the age we live in, though bad, hath sense enough to know, where rewards and encouragements are due, and readiness to bestow them accordingly."

## LETTER XCV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 3d May, 1774.

"I am greatly obliged and honoured by what the hierarchy have done, and are doing for me. Of Dr Law's attack I shall take no further notice. *

"I received a letter, two days ago, from Dr Hurd. † It is a very kind letter, and much in praise of the 'Minstrel.' Lord Chesterfield's 'Letters,' he says, are well calculated for the purpose of teaching "manners without morals" to our young people of quality. This opinion I had indeed begun to form concerning them, from some short extracts in the newspapers. In one of these extracts I was greatly surprised to see such a pompous encomium on Bolingbroke's *Patriot King;* which has always appeared to me a mere *vox et præterea nihil.* Plato was one of the first who introduced the fashion of giving

* See p. 45.

† Now Lord Bishop of Worcester.

us fine words instead of good sense; in this, as in his other faults, he has been successfully imitated by Shaftesbury; but I know not whether he, or any other author, has ever put together so many words, with so little meaning, as Bolingbroke, in his papers on Patriotism.

"Lord Monboddo's second volume has been published some time. It is, I think, much better than the first, and contains much learning, and not a little ingenuity; but can never be very interesting, except to those who aim at a grammatical and critical knowledge of the Greek tongue. Lord Kaimes's 'Sketches' I have seen. They are not much different from what I expected. A man, who reads thirty years, with a view to collect facts, in support of two or three whimsical theories, may, no doubt, collect a great number of facts, and make a very large book. The world will wonder when they hear of a modern philosopher, who seriously denies the existence of such a principle as universal benevolence;—a point, of which no good man can entertain a doubt for a single moment.

"I am sorry for poor Goldsmith. There were some things in his temper which I did not like; but I liked many things in his genius; and I was

sorry to find, last summer, that he looked upon me as a person who seemed to stand between him and his interest. However, when next we meet, all this will be forgotten; and the jealousy of authors, which, Dr Gregory used to say, was next in rancour to that of physicians, will be no more.

"I am glad that you are pleased with the additional stanzas of the second canto of the 'Minstrel;' but I fear you are too indulgent. How it will be relished by the public, I cannot even guess. I know all its faults; but I cannot remedy them, for they are faults in the first concoction; they result from the imperfection of the plan. I am much obliged to you, madam, for advising that two copies should be presented to their Majesties, which, Dilly writes me word, has been done by my good friend Dr Majendie. This honour I meant to have solicited when the second edition came out, which will be soon. My reason for this delay was, that the first edition having been put to the press, and some sheets of it printed off before I knew, I had it not in my power to order any copies on fine paper. But it is better as it is: the paper of the copy I have, is not at all amiss.

"My 'Essay on Laughter' advances but slowly. I have all my materials at hand; but my health obliges me to labour very moderately in reducing them into order. I am very unwilling to relinquish the hope of receiving from you, madam, some assistance in completing my volume. I beg you will think of it. Perhaps you may find more leisure when you come into the north.

"Mr Mason has never answered the letter I wrote to him, concerning the subscription. I guessed, from the tenor of his letters, that he is (as you say) out of humour with the world. Mr Dilly writes me word, that he says he is tempted to throw his *Life of Mr Gray* (which is now finished, or nearly so,) into the fire, so much is he dissatisfied with the late decision on literary property. By the way, I heartily wish the legislature may, by a new law, set this matter on a proper footing. Literature must suffer, if this decision remains unobviated."

## LETTER XCVI.

DR BEATTIE TO DR BLACKLOCK.

Aberdeen, 23d May, 1774.

"If the second part of the 'Minstrel' has contributed for one half hour to your amusement, it has in some measure answered the end for which it was written. It was much more laborious than the first part in the composing; but I question whether it will be so popular. The public taste requires, and justly too, more fable than my plan will allow me to put into it; for fable is to poetry, what bones are to the human body, or timbers and rafters to a building. But my purpose, from the beginning, was to make a didactic or philosophical, rather than a narrative poem; and the title unluckily gives the reader reason to expect more story, than I can, without the greatest inconveniency, afford. However, I hope the piece will receive the encouragement which it may really deserve: as yet, I have no reason to complain; for a second edition of the second part

was called for, within a week after the publication."

## LETTER XCVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 27th May, 1774.

"I am much diverted by Johnson's character of Lord Chesterfield's Letters. Dr Hurd and Mr Mason (for I have heard from them both, since the second part of 'The Minstrel' came out) give nearly the same account of them.

"Mr Mason seems now to be tolerably reconciled to the subscription, but he has found a new subject of concern, in this allegorical picture, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which, he thinks, can hardly fail to hurt my character in good earnest. I know not certainly in what light Mr Mason considers this picture; but, so far as I have yet heard, he is singular in his opinion. If Mr Gray had done me the honour to address an ode to me, and speak in high terms of my attack on the sceptics, my enemies might have blamed him for his partiality, and the world might have thought

that he had employed his muse in too mean an office; but would any body have blamed me? If Sir Joshua Reynolds thinks more favourably of me than I deserve, (which he certainly does,) and if he entertains the same favourable sentiments of my cause, which I wish him and all the world to entertain; I should be glad to know from Mr Mason, what there is in all this to fix any blame on *my* character? Indeed, if *I* had planned this picture, and urged Sir Joshua to paint it, and paid him for his trouble, and then had solicited admittance for it into the Exhibition, the world would have had good reason to exclaim against me as a vain coxcomb; but I am persuaded, that nobody will ever suspect me of this: for nobody can do so, without first supposing that I am a fool.

"About three weeks ago, I received a very short letter from Dr Priestley, of which the following is a copy: "Reverend Sir—Thinking it "right that every person should be apprised of "any publication in which his writings are ani- "madverted upon, I take the liberty to send you "a copy of a sheet, that will soon be published, "in which I announce my intention to remark "upon the principles of your 'Essay on Truth.'

"I am, reverend Sir, your very humble servant, "J. Priestley." This sheet contains a preface to a third vol. of 'Institutes of Religion.' That you, Madam, may be the better enabled to judge between him and me, I send it to you in a separate packet, which will be delivered along with this.

"I never saw Dr Priestley; I greatly esteem his talents as a natural philosopher, particularly as a chemist: whether his talents in moral philosophy be as distinguished, I have no opportunity of knowing. His excessive admiration of Mr Hartley's book, (see the preface, page 21.) I have heard mentioned as one of the learned Doctor's hobby-horses. I am not ignorant of his connections in the way of party; but I hope, in this attack upon my book, he is determined by nothing but a love of truth. I need not tell you, that he is the oracle of the Socinians and Dissenters; and the public will no doubt expect that I should answer his preface. This will not be a difficult matter. The Doctor must certainly have read my book, since he declares, in print, his disapprobation of it; but that he has read it attentively, and without prejudice, is not clear. Certain it is, that every one of his remarks on me,

as they appear in this preface, is founded in a gross misapprehension of my doctrine. I have written him a letter, which I enclose in this packet for your perusal; if you approve of it, please to cause it be forwarded to him; if not, you may suppress it.

"One would think, from reading Dr Priestley's preface, that Dr Reid, Dr Oswald, and I, wrote in concert, and with a view to enforce the very same hypothesis. But the truth is, that I write in concert with nobody: Dr Oswald's book I never read, till after my own was published; and Dr Reid (to whom I have made all due acknowledgments for the instruction I have received from his work) never saw mine, till it was in the hands of the public. The controversial part of Dr Reid's book regards the existence of matter chiefly; Dr Oswald's system (though there are many good things in his book) I never distinctly understood. The former of these authors differs in many things from me; and the latter (if I am rightly informed) has actually attacked a fundamental principle of mine, in a second volume, lately published, which I have not yet got leisure to read.

I have already observed, that, among various plans suggested by Dr Beattie's friends in England, for the advancement of his fortune, that of his taking orders in the Church of England had been mentioned to him.* It has been seen, by the preceding correspondence with Lady Mayne and Mr John Pitt, that he had entirely abandoned that idea. The zeal of his friends, however, was not abated, and he received another very flattering proposition, to the same purpose, through the hands of Dr Porteus.

* See Vol. I. p. 333.

## LETTER XCVIII.

THE REV. DR PORTEUS TO DR BEATTIE.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, July 24th, 1774.

" I am desired, by one of the Episcopal bench, whose name I am not yet at liberty to mention, to ask you, whether you have any objections to taking orders in the Church of England. If you have not, there is a living, now vacant, in his gift, worth near five hundred pounds a-year, which will be at your service.

" Be pleased to send me your answer to this, as soon as possible, and direct it to me at Peterborough, in Northamptonshire, where I shall probably be before your letter can reach me. I feel myself happy in being the instrument of communicating to you so honourable and advantageous a proof of that esteem, which your literary labours have secured to you, amongst all ranks of people."

To this proposition, so very flattering, as well as advantageous, Dr Beattie gave the following admirable reply, which does the highest credit to the purity of his principles, and the integrity of his mind.

## LETTER XCIX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR PORTEUS.

Peterhead, 4th August, 1774.

"I have made many efforts to express, in something like adequate language, my grateful sense of the honour done me by the Right Reverend Prelate, who makes the offer conveyed to me in your most friendly letter of the 24th July. But every new effort serves only to convince me, more and more, how unequal I am to the task.

"When I consider the extraordinary reception which my weak endeavours in the cause of truth have met with, and compare the greatness

of my success, with the insignificance of my merit, what reasons have I not to be thankful and humble! to be ashamed that I have done so little public service, and to regret that so little *is in my power!* to rouse every power of my nature to purposes of benevolent tendency, in order to justify, by my intentions at least, the unexampled generosity of my benefactors!

"My religious opinions would, no doubt, if I were to declare them, sufficiently account for, and vindicate, my becoming a member of the Church of England: and I flatter myself, that my studies, way of life, and habits of thinking, have always been such, as would not disqualify me for an ecclesiastical profession. If I were to become a clergyman, the Church of England would certainly be my choice; as I think, that, in regard to church-government and church-service, it has many great and peculiar advantages. And I am so far from having any natural disinclination to holy orders, that I have several times, at different periods of my life, been disposed to enter into them, and have directed my studies accordingly. Various accidents, however, prevented me; some of them pretty remarkable, and such as I think I might, without presump-

tion, ascribe to a particular interposition of Providence.

"The offer, now made me, is great and generous beyond all expectation. I am well aware of all the advantages and honours that would attend my accepting, and yet, I find myself obliged, in conscience, to decline it; as I lately did another of the same kind (though not so considerable) that was made me, on the part of another English gentleman.* The reasons which did then, and do now determine me, I beg leave, Sir, briefly to lay before you.

"I wrote the 'Essay on Truth,' with the certain prospect of raising many enemies, with very faint hopes of attracting the public attention, and without any views of advancing my fortune. I published it, however, because I thought it might probably do a little good, by bringing to nought, or at least lessening the reputation of that wretched system of sceptical philosophy, which had made a most alarming progress, and done incredible mischief to this country. My enemies have been at great pains to represent my views, in that publication, as very different: and

* See his letter to Lady Mayne, p. 48.

that my principal, or only motive, was to make a book, and, if possible, to raise myself higher in the world. So that, if I were now to accept preferment in the church, I should be apprehensive that I might strengthen the hands of the gainsayer, and give the world some ground to believe that my love of truth was not quite so ardent, or so pure, as I had pretended.

" Besides, might it not have the appearance of levity and insincerity, and, by some, be construed into a want of principle, if I were at these years, (for I am now thirty-eight) to make such an important change in my way of life, and to quit, with no other *apparent* motive than that of bettering my circumstances, that church of which I have hitherto been a member? If my book has any tendency to do good, as I flatter myself it has, I would not, for the wealth of the Indies, do any thing to counteract that tendency; and I am afraid that tendency might, in some measure, be counteracted, (at least in this country,) if I were to give the adversary the least ground to charge me with inconsistency. It is true, that the force of my reasonings cannot be *really* affected by my character; truth is truth, whoever be the speaker: but even truth itself becomes

less respectable, when spoken, or supposed to be spoken, by insincere lips.

" It has also been hinted to me, by several persons of very sound judgment, that what I have written, or may hereafter write, in favour of religion, has a chance of being more attended to, if I continue a layman, than if I were to become a clergyman. Nor am I without apprehensions, (though some of my friends think them ill-founded,) that, from entering so late in life, and from so remote a province, into the Church of England, some degree of ungracefulness, particularly in pronunciation, might adhere to my performances in public, sufficient to render them less pleasing, and consequently less useful.

" Most of these reasons were repeatedly urged upon me, during my stay in England last summer; and I freely own, that, the more I consider them, the more weight they seem to have. And from the peculiar manner in which the King has been graciously pleased to distinguish me, and from other circumstances, I have some ground to presume, that it is his Majesty's pleasure that I should continue where I am, and employ my leisure hours in prosecuting the studies I have begun. This I can find time to do more effec-

tually in Scotland than in England, and in Aberdeen than in Edinburgh; which, by the bye, was one of my chief reasons for declining the Edinburgh professorship. The business of my professorship here is indeed toilsome; but I have, by fourteen years practice, made myself so much master of it, that it now requires little mental labour; and our long summer vacation, of seven months, leaves me at my own disposal, for the greatest and best part of the year: a situation favourable to literary projects, and now become necessary to my health.

"Soon after my return home, in autumn last, I had occasion to write to the Archbishop of York on this subject. I specified my reasons for giving up all thoughts of church-preferment; and his Grace was pleased to approve of them; nay, he condescended so far as to say, they did me honour. I told his Grace, moreover, that I had already given a great deal of trouble to my noble and generous patrons in England, and could not think of being any longer a burden to them, now that his Majesty had so graciously and so generously made for me a provision equal to my wishes, and such as puts it in my power to obtain, in Scot-

land, every convenience of life, to which I have any title, or any inclination, to aspire.

" I must, therefore, make it my request to you, that you would present my humble respects, and most thankful acknowledgments, to the eminent person, at whose desire you wrote your last letter, (whose name, I hope, you will not be under the necessity of concealing from me,) and assure him, that, though I have taken the liberty to decline his generous offer, I shall, to the last hour of my life, preserve a most grateful remembrance of the honour he has condescended to confer upon me; and, to prove myself not altogether unworthy of his goodness, shall employ that health and leisure which Providence may hereafter afford me, in opposing infidelity, heresy, and error, and in promoting sound literature, and Christian truth, to the utmost of my power."

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Although secrecy was thus enjoined, at the period when the correspondence respecting the living took place, yet it is right that the name of the Right Reverend Prelate, who made this

most generous offer to Dr Beattie, should not be longer concealed, now that both are dead. Dr Thomas, at that time Bishop of Winchester, was the person, whose letter to Dr Porteus I now subjoin.

## LETTER C.

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER TO THE REV. DR PORTEUS.

Farnham-Castle, 24th July, 1774.

"It is now, I think, three weeks ago since I wrote to you. I then suggested a conversation that passed between us at Chelsea, relating to Dr Beattie, and my disposition to shew him some mark of my esteem and good-will.

"I have a living now vacant, of five hundred pounds a-year, in Hants, and I wish that you would sound him, with secrecy, upon the subject, and let me have a line from you as soon as you can. The living has been vacant a month; and I shall have no rest till I can dispose of it."

The transactions which I have here related, respecting the Edinburgh professorship, and the church-preferment offered to him in England, form a somewhat remarkable period in the life of Dr Beattie, as they evinced the fixed resolution he had taken, and from which he did not deviate, of continuing, during the remainder of his days, at Aberdeen. We find him, indeed, paying occasional visits to Edinburgh and London, during the summer months of the College-vacation. But these visits seem to have had no other object than his amusement, and the enjoying, occasionally, the society of his numerous friends at both places. He was likewise constant in his visits every summer to Peterhead,* a place

* Peterhead, a small town in the county of Aberdeen, situated on the most easterly promontory of Scotland; famous for a Chalybeate spring of the nature of the waters of Tunbridge-wells, and for salt-water baths of admirable construction, which draw thither a considerable resort of fashionable company during the summer season, some in search of health, and others of amusement. But it is chiefly to the industry, the sobriety, and prudence of the inhabitants, that Peterhead, from being

to which he was strongly attached, and in which, as well as in the society of some friends there, he much delighted. He thought the air of the place particularly healthy, and useful to his constitution; " and I have often," says a friend, who gave me this information, " seen him stand for a " long time, on the adjoining promontory, inha- " ling, in a fine day, the pure air from the ocean, " and enjoying the majestic prospect, expressing " great delight in both." He had great confidence, too, in the tonic powers of the mineral spring, and of the salt-water baths; and his hope of being able to go through his professional duties with comfort, during the winter, was in exact proportion to the length of time he had been able to spend at Peterhead the preceding summer.

merely an insignificant fishing-town, owes its rapid encrease in commerce, manufactures, and consequent population; so that, from two thousand four hundred and twenty souls, to which number only the inhabitants amounted, so lately as the year 1764, the town is said to have contained no fewer than four thousand one hundred in the year 1794, and is daily increasing. †

† Statistical Account of Scotland, Parish of Peterhead, Vol. XVI. p. 7. and p. 563.

Nor was it on account of the waters, the baths, and the healthful air alone, that he was so greatly attached to Peterhead. He loved the people, and they loved and respected him; and there were several of the venerable old inhabitants of the place, for whose integrity and simplicity of character he entertained, and was often heard to express, a high regard Although he by no means shunned the society of the numerous strangers, who flock to Peterhead in the course of the season, and sometimes dined with them at their common table, yet he spent much of his time alone, in study, or in the society of a few select friends. During the fine weather, he dedicated many hours to his favourite and healthful amusement, of walking in the fields, or along the seashore; and he used pleasantly to say, that there was not a road, nor a foot-path, not a rock, nor any remarkable stone, in the neighbourhood of Peterhead, with which he was not *personally* acquainted.

One of the chief employments, and indeed amusements, of his leisure hours, at this period, was the conducting, and superintending the education of his eldest son, whom he placed, first, at the usual public schools at Aberdeen, and after-

wards at the Marischal-College in that city. There the youth's proficiency, in the various branches of classical learning and philosophy, was uncommonly great. He inherited, no doubt, by nature, an acute genius, which he cultivated by incessant and laborious application. But it cannot be questioned, that much of the uncommon progress which he made in the various branches of science, to which he applied himself, must have been owing to the incalculable advantages which he derived from the taste, the learning, and the unremitting attention of so able a preceptor as his father. Of young Beattie, I shall have ample occasion to speak hereafter.

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In Dr Beattie's letters to Mrs Montagu, 27th May, 1774, he had mentioned his having received a letter from Dr Priestley, intimating his intention of animadverting on the 'Essay on Truth.' In the following letter, Dr Beattie takes farther notice of this subject.

## LETTER CI.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 5th August, 1774.

"Dr Priestley's Preface is come out, without any acknowledgment of the information conveyed to him in my letter. But he has written to me on the occasion, and says, he will publish my letter in that book which he is preparing, in opposition to the 'Essay on Truth,' as he thinks such a letter will do me honour. He praises the candour and generosity which, he says, appear in my letter, and seems to be satisfied that I wrote my book with a good intention; which is the only merit he allows me, at least he mentions no other. He blames me exceedingly for my want of moderation, and for speaking, as I have done, of the *moral influence* of opinions. He owns, that his notions, on some of the points in which he differs from me, are exceedingly unpopular, and likely to continue so; and says, that, perhaps, no two persons professing Christianity ever thought more differently than he and I do. It is a loss

to me, he seems to think, that I have never been acquainted with such persons as himself and his friends in England: to this he is inclined to impute the improper style I have made use of on some subjects; but, he hopes, a little reflection, and a candid examination of what he is to write against me, will bring me to a better way of thinking and speaking. His motive for entering the lists with me, is no other, he says, than "a "sincere and pretty strong, though, perhaps, a "mistaken regard to truth." This is the substance of his letter, as I understand it. There are, indeed, some things in it, which I do not distinctly understand; and therefore, I believe, I shall not at present make any reply. He does not tell me, what the points of difference between us are: but I find, from some reports that have penetrated even to this remote corner, that he has taken some pains to let it be known, that he is writing an answer to my book. A volume of his 'Institutes of Religion' lately fell into my hand, which is the first of his theological works I have seen; and, I must confess, it does not give me any high opinion of him. His notions of Christianity are indeed different from mine; so very different, that I know not whether I should

think it necessary or proper to assume the title of a Christian, if I were to think and write as he does. When one proceeds so far, as to admit some parts of the Gospel History, and reject others; as to suppose, that some of the facts, recorded by the evangelists of our Saviour, may reasonably be disbelieved, and others doubted; when one, I say, has proceeded thus far, we may, without breach of charity, conclude, that he has within him a spirit of paradox and presumption, which may prompt him to proceed much further. Dr Priestley's doctrines seem to me to strike at the very vitals of Christianity. His success in some of the branches of natural knowledge seems to have intoxicated him, and led him to fancy that he was master of every subject, and had a right to be a dictator in all: for, in this book of his, there is often a boldness of assertion, followed by a weakness of argument, which no man of parts would adventure upon, who did not think that his word would be taken for a law. I am impatient for the appearance of his book against me, as I cannot prepare matters for a new edition of the 'Essay on Truth,' till I see what he has to say against it.

"I have not seen Dr Gerard's 'Essay on Ge-

nius.' I know the author very well, for I studied philosophy under him; he is a man of great worth, learning, and good sense. His 'Essay on Taste' (which you have probably seen) was well received; and, I am confident, there will be many good things in this new work, notwithstanding the unpromising and hackneyed title."

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In the course of the year 1774, Dr Priestley published his promised work, by the title of "An "Examination of Dr Reid's Inquiry into the Hu- "man Mind, on the Principles of Common Sense; "of Dr Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Im- "mutability of Truth; and of Dr Oswald's Ap- "peal to Common Sense, in behalf of Religion;" in which he has violently attacked the doctrines of these philosophers.

To each of them Dr Priestley had sent a letter, containing a sheet of his introduction, and announcing his intention of animadverting on their works. To that letter, as has been seen, Dr Beattie had written an answer, in which he

had stated certain positions, which, if Dr Priestley attributed to him, Dr Beattie insisted were no where to be found, either expressed or implied, in any part of his works. This letter, Dr Priestley has very candidly inserted, in an appendix to his 'Examination.'

Although Dr Priestley treats these three eminent authors with great contempt, yet he speaks of Dr Beattie with most moderation. He believes, he says, that Dr Beattie wrote his 'Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth,' with the very best intention in the world. And that it was nothing but his zeal in the most excellent cause, that of religion, which betrayed him into rash censures, and into a mode of reasoning, which Dr Priestley cannot help thinking to be very prejudicial to the cause of that very *truth* which he means to support, and favouring that very *scepticism* which he imagined he was overthrowing.

I believe farther, continues Dr Priestley, and I most sincerely rejoice in it, that Dr Beattie's 'Treatise' has done a great deal of good to the cause of religion; and I hope it will still continue to do so, with a great majority of those who are most in danger of being seduced by the sophis-

try of Mr Hume, and other modern unbelievers; I mean with *superficial thinkers*, who are satisfied with seeing superficial objections answered, in a lively, though a superficial manner.

But there is danger, he adds, lest other persons, of greater penetration, finding, that Dr Beattie argues on fallacious unphilosophical principles, should reject at once, and without farther examination, all that he has built upon them. With respect to such persons, it may be of importance to show, Dr Priestley continues, that religion, though assailed from so many quarters as it has been of late, is under no necessity of taking refuge in such untenable fortresses, as Dr Reid, Dr Beattie, and Dr Oswald, have provided for her; but that she may safely face the enemy on his own ground, opposing argument to argument, and silencing sophistry by rational discussion. And as he believes Dr Beattie, he says, to be a man of candour, he doubts not, but he will himself take in good part his free animadversions. If *truth* be really our object, continues Dr Priestley, as it is in the titles of our books, and we be free from any improper bias, we shall rejoice in the detection of error, though it should appear to have sheltered itself under our own roofs. I am

very serious, he goes on, when I add, that such a degree of candour and impartiality may be more especially expected of *Christians*, and, more especially still, of those who stand forth as champions in the cause of Christianity, which is at the same time the cause of the most important truth, and of the most generous and distinguished virtue. *

The declaration with which Dr Priestley prefaces his 'Examination of the Essay on Truth,' has no doubt, an appearance of candour and moderation, which, however, does not very well agree with the manner in which he has conducted his attack. Indeed, no two writers were ever more opposite to each other in their modes of thinking on the most interesting subjects. Dr Priestley was an avowed Socinian; a staunch believer in the doctrine of necessity; and, though he admitted the great pillar of Christianity, the resurrection of the dead, yet he subscribed to the doctrine of materialism. † In all this, and in many other particulars, the principles of Dr Beattie were the very reverse. The attack of Dr

* Priestley's Remarks on Dr Beattie's Essay, p. 115.

† Preface to "Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit," p. xiii.

Priestley, however, gave him no concern. He appears, indeed, by his correspondence with his friends, to have formed, at first, the resolution of replying to it; and he speaks as if he had already prepared his materials, and of being altogether in such a state of forwardness, as to be fully ready for the task. On farther consideration, however, he abandoned the idea, and he no doubt judged wisely. For, while Dr Priestley's 'Examination' is now never heard of, the 'Essay on Truth' remains a classical work, of the highest reputation and authority.

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In the following letter to one of his young friends, Dr Beattie speaks of the style of Addison, a topic on which he delighted to enlarge. Of the prose of that inimitable writer, he could not, indeed, speak too highly; but of his poetry, Dr Beattie's judgment seems to be too severe. While, on the other hand, most readers, I believe, will think his praise of the comedy of 'The Drummer' not a little extravagant.

In this letter, Dr Beattie mentions the story, which Pope and his friends certainly believed, that the first book of the 'Iliad' was either translated by Addison himself in opposition to Pope, or, if by Tickell, under Addison's direction. But of this no clear proof has ever been produced, nor any thing else than some slight and vague suspicions, of no authority. The learned Dr Hurd, the present Bishop of Worcester, in his 'Life of Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester,' has given an acute and ingenious dissertation on the subject, in which he strongly vindicates Addison from the charge brought against him by Pope and his friends, and shows, with every appearance of probability, that the translation was Tickell's own, and most likely begun by him before he knew any thing of Pope's undertaking. Dr Hurd adds some curious conjectures as to the cause of Pope's entertaining the suspicion, respecting this translation by Tickell, of which his lordship has in his library a printed copy, wherein are entered many criticisms and remarks in Pope's own hand; and from two of these, compared together, the Bishop thinks the true ground of Pope's suspicion may, with great plausibility, be collected. He farther says, that on mentioning these circum-

stances to the Bishop of Gloucester, that prelate owned himself so much satisfied, that he declared, if he lived to publish a new edition of the works of Pope, he should omit the charge against Addison. *

In this letter to Mr Cameron, Dr Beattie, who could know nothing of this dissertation of the Bishop of Worcester's, because it was not printed till long afterwards, agrees exactly in opinion with the learned prelate, as to the versification of that first book of the 'Iliad' being unworthy of Addison; and if Dr Beattie ever saw the dissertation, he must have rejoiced to find the memory of his favourite author so successfully vindicated, against this malignant reproach. The unfortunate quarrel between Pope and Addison, which gave occasion to one of the severest and most eloquent satires in the whole range of English poetry, † is well known.

* Life of Bishop Warburton, prefixed to the edition of his works in quarto, p. 56—63.

† Pope's Works, Vol. IV. p. 17. Prologue to the Satires, l. 193.

## LETTER CII.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR WILLIAM CAMERON.*

Aberdeen, 22d September, 1774.

"Your judgment of Addison is quite right. His prose is most elegant, and deserves to be carefully studied for the style, as well as for the matter. But his poetry is in general cold, and prosaic, and inharmonious. Yet his tragedy of 'Cato' has great merit; and his comedy of 'The Drummer' is, in my opinion, one of the best dramatic pieces in our language. He attempted a translation of Homer, and actually published the first book of it, under Tickell's name, in opposition to Pope's; but the performance is altogether un-

* Minister of the parish of Kirk-Newton, in the county of West Lothian. Having studied at Marischal College, Aberdeen, he had been a pupil of Dr Beattie's, who ever after entertained for him much esteem, as Mr Cameron, in return, regarded Dr Beattie with sentiments of the warmest enthusiasm. Mr Cameron had early discovered a considerable degree of poetical genius, of which he has given no unfavourable specimen, in a small collection of poems, printed some years ago. The instructions to young students, in this letter, are excellent.

worthy of Addison, and totally destitute of the fire, and energy, and harmony of Homer.

" Your studies are in an excellent train. Read the classics day and night, till you make yourself master of them. Exercise yourself in frequent compositions in English prose. Write your thoughts on every subject, and carefully keep what you write. Attend to the phraseology of the best English writers, with a view to correct and improve your English style. We Scotsmen find it a very difficult matter to get rid of the barbarisms of our native dialect."

## LETTER CIII.

### MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Hill-Street, January the 17th, 1775.

" I approve greatly of what you have said of Lord Chesterfield's ' Letters;' truth, so elegantly and concisely expressed, will make an impression on the head and heart, and efface the false principles those letters had introduced into the minds of the unwary.

" Lord Chesterfield was an example of the justice of your assertion, that if men believed one another to be knaves and hypocrites, politeness of language and attitude, instead of being graceful, would appear as ridiculous as the chattering of a parrot, or the grinning of a monkey. For the moment we are pleased with the imitation of sounds and gesture in the parrot or the ape, (but that pleasure not arising from apprehension of some sentiment, expressed by voice or action,) though we admire the art which effects the imitation, sympathies and affections are quite out of the question. Thus, all the world admired the politeness of Lord Chesterfield, and acknowledged the elegance of his civilities; they felt, at the time, a soothing sweetness in his conversation; but all this was perfectly void of any mutual endearment, and they parted on the same terms as the audience and a musician; the first admiring the art which for a moment excited sentiment, unfelt by the artist; the other pleased with the impression he had made by the energies of his peculiar skill.

" I perfectly agree with you, that Dr Hawkesworth said many rash things in his works. I believe he was a good Christian, but not having

had a literary education, he was not systematical; the human mind is liable to strange starts, if it has not been in early and good training. If voyages were well written, they would admirably evince the regular government and superintendence of Providence; but ignorance, rashness, and a love of novelty, and the marvellous, makes them operate in a different direction.

"I am sure you will rejoice to hear the Duchess of Portland is now well. It has pleased God to preserve still to us an example to the great, and a protector of the unfortunate, and the most amiable and valuable of friends. I had the happiness of passing yesterday evening with her, in her private dressing-room, in which I passed many of those youthful hours, which dance away with down upon their feet; but never did their smoothest pace, and gayest measure, give me such heart-felt delight, as last night's reflection on the many mercies that had led us both such a series of years, through a period of innocence, to the present time, so that we can look back with pleasure, and forward with hope, and while we remain here, by mercies past, may indulge a wish to chear each other through the declining path of life."

## LETTER CIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR PORTEUS.

Aberdeen, 4th March, 1775.

"I have just finished a hasty perusal of Dr Johnson's journey. It contains many things worthy of the author, and is, on the whole, very entertaining. His account of the isles is, I dare say, very just: I never was there, and therefore can say nothing of them, from my own knowledge. His accounts of *some* facts, relating to other parts of Scotland, are not unexceptionable. Either he must have been misinformed, or he must have misunderstood his informer, in regard to several of his remarks on the improvement of the country. I am surprised at one of his mistakes, which leads him once or twice into perplexity, and false conjecture: he seems not to have known, that, in the common language of Scotland, *Irish* and *Earse* are both used to denote the speech of the Scots Highlanders; and are as much synonimous (at least in many parts of the kingdom) as *Scotch* and *Scottish*. *Irish* is gene-

rally thought the genteeler appellation, and *Earse* the vulgar and colloquial. His remarks on the *trees* of Scotland, must greatly surprise a native. In some of our provinces, trees cannot be reared by any method of cultivation we have yet discovered; in some, where trees flourish extremely well, they are not *much* cultivated, because they are not necessary: but in others, we have store of wood, and forests of great extent, and of great antiquity. I am sorry to see in Johnson some asperities, that seem to be the effect of national prejudice. If he thinks himself thoroughly acquainted with the character of the Scots as a nation, he is greatly mistaken. The Scots have virtues, and the Scots have faults, of which he seems to have had no particular information. I am one of those who wish to see the English spirit and English manners prevail over the whole island; for I think the English have a generosity and openness of nature, which many of us want. But we are not all, without exception, a nation of cheats and liars, as Johnson seems willing to believe, and to represent us. Of the better sort of our people, the character is just the reverse. I admire Johnson's genius; I esteem him for his virtues; I shall ever cherish a grateful remem-

brance of the civilities I have received from him: I have often, in this country, exerted myself in defence both of his character and writings; but there are in this book several things which I cannot defend. His unbelief, in regard to Ossian, I am not surprised at; but I wonder greatly at his credulity in regard to the second-sight. I cannot imagine on what grounds he could say, that, in the universities of Scotland, every master of arts may be a doctor when he pleases. I never heard of such a thing, and I have been connected with our universities ever since I was a boy. Our method of giving doctor's degrees I do not approve of; but we proceed on a principle quite different from what Dr Johnson mentions."

## LETTER CV.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Gatton-Park, near Ryegate, 27th June, 1775.

"I would have written to you long ago, if I had had time to write a long letter; but, for six or seven weeks after I came to town, I was so constantly engaged with company, that I had no

leisure at all. The greatest part of that time, I lodged with my friend Dr Porteus, at Lambeth, who did every thing in his power to amuse and entertain me. His conversation is cheerful, and occasionally even sportive: He is warm and zealous as a friend; kind, gentle, and polite, as a companion. He is now gone to reside at one of his livings in the country, whither he earnestly wished us to follow him; but I am afraid we shall see him no more this summer. We are now with Sir William Mayne, at one of the finest places I have ever seen; a place adorned with every charm that hill and dale, lawn and grove, wood and water, can bestow, and which wants nothing but cataracts, precipices, barren mountains, and a view of the sea, to make it supereminent in every rural beauty. But, though we have not the sea, we have a boundless prospect of a rich country, extending upwards of thirty miles. Here I have made it my business to be as idle as possible, in order to indemnify myself for the fatigue and bustle of London; and, since I came hither, my health has improved greatly. Mrs Beattie is also much better. But we must soon think of returning to the north, as we wish to be in Aberdeen

early in August, and have many visits to make by the way.

"During my stay in London, I visited most of my old friends, and made several new acquisitions, particularly among the bishops and clergy, who all showed me a degree of attention, far superior to my deservings. I have been at court too, where the King (who knew me at first sight) was pleased to speak to me very graciously, asking me several questions about my studies, and observing, that I looked much better than when he saw me last.

"You will no doubt be curious to hear something of Priestley. I have not yet met with, nor heard of, one single person, who does not blame his book against Dr Reid and me. Even those of his admirers, who think favourably of his arguments, condemn the spirit of that performance. But the book has attracted very little notice, and would seem at present to be in a fair way of being speedily forgotten, notwithstanding the pains taken by its author to puff it away in newspapers. My inclination was (as I told you) to publish a pamphlet in direct answer to it. But I now begin to think, that will be unnecessary, and will only give scope to further controversy, Dr Priest-

ley having already declared, that he will answer whatever I may publish in my own vindication; and being a man who loves bustle and book-making, he wishes above all things that I should give him a pretext for continuing the dispute. To silence him by force of argument, is, I know, impossible. He would still fall upon new modes of misrepresentation, and would still find it an easy matter to make a book, which should seem plausible to his implicit admirers, or to those who had entered but slightly into the subject. All my friends here have been urging me not to answer him; and have told me, what I know is true, that his work cannot possibly do me any harm; that it has been little read, and will soon be forgotten; that he is a man of that sort, that it is even creditable (on moral and religious subjects at least) to have him for an adversary; and that I cannot gratify him more, than by writing against him. All this, I say, I know to be true; yet I am not entirely of their opinion, who think that I ought to neglect him altogether. I therefore propose to take a middle course: and, without making any formal answer to Dr Priestley, to write something by way of *general answer* to those *objections to my doctrine* that have appeared

hitherto in pamphlets or newspapers; observing, at the same time, that I do not think it worth while to reply to the *abuse* that has been thrown out against me, or to those *misrepresentations of my meaning*, which some authors, particularly Dr Priestley, have thought proper to obtrude upon the world."

## LETTER CVI.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR PORTEUS.

St James's Square, July 9th, 1775.

" Dr Majendie has just returned to me the letter I wrote, declining the offer of the Church-living. I send it to you enclosed. He gave it to the Queen, who condescended to read it over from beginning to end, and was then pleased to say, " That it was a very sensible letter, and did " me much honour." I was anxious, that my reasons for chusing to continue a layman should be known at court; as a report has been circulating, that I declined church-preferment in England, because I could not reconcile myself to the doctrines and discipline of the Church:—a re-

port which those who know me best, know to be ill-founded. I admire the Church of England, on many accounts. I think I could, with a clear conscience, live and die a member, or even a minister of it. Its doctrines seem to me to be those of Christianity; its rites and ceremonies I greatly approve of; and the constitution of its hierarchy is equally favourable to the interests of religion, and the civil government of this country."

## LETTER CVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th August, 1775.

"After passing a few days with our friends at Edinburgh, we proceeded northwards, and arrived here in safety about ten days ago. The last stage of our journey was distinguished by an accident, which, if Providence had not interposed, would have made it the last stage of our life. The iron axle of the chaise snapt suddenly in two, and the carriage was thrown upon its side, within two feet of the brink of a precipice, thirty yards deep. Here we lay for a few moments,

with the horses flouncing about us, till at last, partly by the harness giving way, and partly by the activity of the postilion, they were disengaged from the carriage, and went off at full speed. An English gentleman, on horseback, was then in sight, behind us, who immediately galloped up, and, in the most humane manner, enquired, whether he could be of any service; and, having seen us fairly rescued from our shattered vehicle, remounted his horse, galloped back to the inn, and soon returned with another chaise.

"I have begun my transcribing, which, even if I had nothing to do in the way of correction, would take up some hours of every day for months to come. I have made many attempts at a preface to my quarto volume; but have not, as yet, been able to please myself. It seems to me, that the best way to obviate all objections, and to prevent mistakes, in regard to this publication, is to give a short and honest account of the plain matter of fact. This I have endeavoured to do in the enclosed paper, with which, if you approve of it, I intend to begin my preface. The sequel will contain some account of the additional essays, and of the improvements in this edition of the 'Essay on Truth.'

"To make some amends for the terrifying incident, recorded in the first part of this letter, I shall now mention a pleasing one, which was told me by a gentleman of this country, a friend of mine, who lately went to Stratford upon Avon, to pay his duty at the shrine of the *man of Warwickshire.* You certainly know, that Garrick erected a statue of Shakespeare, in a niche in the wall of the town-house, facing the street. As my friend was contemplating this statue, he saw, perched on one of the hands, a dove, which, at first, he took for an emblem, as the creature was quite motionless; but which, in a little time, began to move, and scramble upwards, till it reached the bosom of the statue, in which, as in its home, it nestled, with great appearance of satisfaction. Charles Boyd, Lord Erroll's brother, has, I hear, composed a little poem on the subject, of which I shall send you a copy, as soon as I have seen the author. If Mr Garrick comes in your way, before you leave England, I am sure he will be pleased with this little narrative.

"The day after I returned home, I visited the little man, whose magnanimity you are pleased to reward in so generous a manner. I found him in great want of clothes, and very infirm; for he

is now of a great age. I told him, that a lady in England had desired me to give him some money. This very interesting news he received with much composure, but implored, with great fervour, the blessing of Heaven upon his benefactress. I have not seen him since that time. Since the days of chivalry, I do not suppose that any lady has had so complete a dwarf, as you, madam, have now at your service; for I cannot think that he is full three feet high."

## LETTER CVIII.

### MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Tunbridge-wells, September 3d, 1775.

"It was not without trembling and horror, I read the account of your overturn, and the dangerous circumstances with which it was attended. The traveller, who is obliged to traverse a pathless wilderness, or in a frail boat to cross the angry ocean, devoutly prays to the Omnipotent to assist and preserve him; the occasion awakens his fears, and animates his devotion: but it is only from experience and reflection we are taught

to consider every day, which passes in safety, and closes in peace, as a mercy. If I had known when you had set out from Denton, how near to a precipice you would have been thrown, I should more earnestly have prayed for your preservation through the journey; but the incident at once makes me sensible, that our safety depends, not on the road, but the hand that upholds and guides us.

"I left Denton the first day of August. On the second, by noon, I reached the episcopal palace of our friend, the Archbishop of York,* at Bishop's Thorpe. I had before visited him at his family-seat at Brodsworth. The man who has a character of his own, is little changed by varying his situation; I can only say, that, at his family-seat, I found him the most of a prelate of any gentleman, and, at his palace, the most of a gentleman I had ever seen. Native dignity is the best ground-work of assumed and special dignity. We talked a great deal of you; the subject was copious and pleasant. We considered you, as a poet, with admiration; as a philoso-

* Honourable Mr Hay Drummond, at that time Archbishop of York.

pher, with respect; as a Christian, with veneration; and as a friend, with affection. His Grace's health is not quite what we could wish. I could indulge myself in no longer than one day's delay at Bishop's Thorpe. I then made the best of my way to London, and, after a very short stay there, came to Tunbridge. I have the happiness of having Mrs Carter in my house, and Mrs Vesey is not at a quarter of a mile's distance; thus, though I live secluded from the general world, I have the society of those I love best. I propose to stay here about three weeks, then I return to London, to prepare for my expedition to the south of France. I have written to a gentleman at Montauban, to endeavour to get for me a large house in any part of that town. I am assured that the climate of Montauban is very delightful; the air is dry, but not piercing, as at Montpelier. There is but little society; but there are some provincial *noblesse*, amongst whom I hope to find some who are more in the *ton* of Louis XIV's court, than I should at Versailles. It is long before the polished manners of a court arrive at the distant regions of a great country; but, when there, they acquire a permanent establishment. At Paris, the minister, or the favou-

rite of the day, is taken for the model, and there is a perpetual change of manners. I think, with some pleasure, of escaping the gloom of our winter, and the bustle of London, and passing my time in the blessings of cheerful tranquillity and soft sunshine; at the same time, there is something painful in removing so far from one's dearest friends.

"I wish much to see the verses on the pretty incident of the dove's alighting on Shakespeare's statue. Of whatever nature and disposition the animal had been, he might have been presented as a symbol of Shakespeare. The gravity and deep thought of the bird of wisdom; the sublime flight of the eagle to the starry regions, and the throne of Jove; the pensive song of the nightingale, when she shuns the noise of folly, and sooths the midnight visionary; the pert jackdaw, that faithfully repeats the chit-chat of the market or the shop; the sky-lark, that, soaring, seems to sing to the denizens of the air, and set her music to the tone of beings of another region,—would all assort with the genius of universal Shakespeare."

## LETTER CIX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 17th September, 1775.

"Your reflections on the little disaster, with which our journey concluded, exactly coincide with mine. I agree with Hawkesworth, that the peril and the deliverance are equally providential; and I wonder he did not see, that both the one and the other may be productive of the very best effects. These little accidents and trials are necessary to put us in mind of that superintending goodness, to which we are indebted for every breath we draw, and of which, in the hour of tranquillity, many of us are too apt to be forgetful. But you, Madam, forget nothing which a Christian ought to remember; and, therefore, I hope and pray, that Providence may defend you from every alarm. By the way, there are several things, besides that preface to which I just now referred, in the writings of Hawkesworth, that shew an unaccountable perplexity of mind in regard to some of the principles of natural religion.

I observed, in his conversation, that he took a pleasure in ruminating upon riddles, and puzzling questions, and calculations; and he seems to have carried something of the same temper into his moral and theological researches. His 'Almoran and Hamet' is a strange confused narrative, and leaves upon the mind of the reader some disagreeable impressions, in regard to the ways of Providence; and from the theory of *pity*, which he has given us somewhere in 'The Adventurer,' one would suspect that he was no enemy to the philosophy of Hobbes. However, I am disposed to impute all this rather to a vague way of thinking, than to any perversity of heart or understanding. Only, I wish, that, in his last work, he had been more ambitious to tell the plain truth, than to deliver to the world a wonderful story. I confess, that, from the first, I was inclined to consider his vile portrait of the manners of Otaheite as in part fictitious; and I am now assured, upon the very best authority, that Dr Solander disavows some of those narrations, or at least declares them to be grossly misrepresented. There is, in almost all the late books of travels I have seen, a disposition on the part of the author to recommend licentious theo-

ries. I would not object to the truth of any fact that is warranted by the testimony of competent witnesses. But how few of our travellers are competent judges of the facts they relate! How few of them know any thing accurately of the language of those nations, whose laws, religion, and moral sentiments, they pretend to describe! And how few of them are free from that inordinate love of the marvellous, which stimulates equally the vanity of the writer, and the curiosity of the reader! Suppose a Japanese crew to arrive in England, take in wood and water, exchange a few commodities; and, after a stay of three months, to set sail for their own country, and there set forth a history of the English government, religion, and manners: it is, I think, highly probable, that, for one truth, they would deliver a score of falsehoods. But Europeans, it will be said, have more sagacity, and know more of mankind. Be it so: but this advantage is not without inconveniences, sufficient, perhaps, to counterbalance it. When a European arrives in any remote part of the globe, the natives, if they know any thing of his country, will be apt to form no favourable opinion of his intentions, with regard to their liberties; if they know no-

thing of him, they will yet keep aloof, on account of his strange language, complexion, and accoutrements. In either case, he has little chance of understanding their laws, manners, and principles of action, except by a long residence in the country, which would not suit the views of one traveller in five thousand. He, therefore, picks up a few strange plants and animals, which he may do with little trouble or danger; and, at his return to Europe, is welcomed by the literati as a philosophic traveller of most accurate observation, and unquestionable veracity. He describes, perhaps, with tolerable exactness, the soils, plants, and other irrational curiosities of the new country, which procures credit to what he has to say of the people; though his accuracy in describing the material phenomena is no proof of his capacity to explain the moral. One can easily dig to the root of a plant, but it is not so easy to penetrate the motive of an action; and, till the motive of an action be known, we are no competent judges of its morality, and in many cases the motive of an action is not to be known without a most intimate knowledge of the language and manners of the agent. Our traveller then delivers a few facts of the moral

kind, which, perhaps, he does not understand, and from them draws some inferences suitable to the taste of the times, or to a favourite hypothesis. He tells us of a Californian, who sold his bed in a morning, and came with tears in his eyes to beg it back at night; whence, he very wisely infers, that the poor Californians are hardly one degree above the brutes in understanding, for that they have neither foresight nor memory sufficient to direct their conduct on the most common occasions of life. In a word, they are quite a different species of animal from the European; and it is a gross mistake to think, that all mankind are descended from the same first parents. But one needs not go so far as to California, in quest of men who sacrifice a future good to a present gratification. In the metropolis of Great Britain, one may meet with many reputed Christians, who would act the same part, for the pleasure of carousing half a day in a gin-shop. Again, to illustrate the same important truth, that man is a beast, or very little better, we are told of another nation, on the banks of the Orellana, so wonderfully stupid, that they cannot reckon beyond the number three, but point to the hair of their head, whenever they would

signify a greater number; as if four, and four thousand, were to them equally inconceivable. But, whence it comes to pass, that these people are capable of speech, or of reckoning at all, even so far as to three, is a difficulty of which our historian attempts not the solution. But till he shall solve it, I must beg leave to tell him, that the one half of his tale contradicts the other as effectually, as if he had told us of a people who were so weak as to be incapable of bodily exertion, and yet, that he had seen one of them lift a stone of a hundred weight.—I beg your pardon, Madam, for running into this subject. The truth is, I was lately thinking to write upon it; but I shall not have leisure these many months.

"Take no farther concern about your dwarf. The person whom you honour with your notice, I shall always think it my duty to care for. I have let it be known in the town what you have done for him; which, I hope, will be a spur to the generosity of others. He has paid me but one visit as yet. His wants are few; and he seems to be modest as well as magnanimous. Both virtues certainly entitle him to consideration.

"I have not yet seen the verses on Shakespeare

and the dove. One thing I am certain of, which is, that they will contain nothing so much to the purpose, or so elegant, as what you have said on the occasion, in prose. You justly remark, that any bird of character, from the eagle to the sky-lark, from the owl to the mock-bird, might symbolise with one or other of the attributes of that universal genius. But do not you think, that his dove-like qualities are among those on which he *now* reflects with peculiar complacency? And I think it could be shown, from many things in his writings, that he resembled the dove as much as the eagle. There are no surly fellows among his favourite characters; and he seems to excel himself in the delineation of a good-natured one. Witness his Brutus, who is indeed finished *con amore;* and who, in gentleness of nature, exceeds even the Brutus of the good-natured Plutarch, as this last exceeded, by many degrees, (if we are to believe some creditable historians,) the true original Brutus, who fell at Philippi. There are, besides, in the writings of Shakespeare, innumerable passages that bespeak a mind peculiarly attentive to the rights of humanity, and to the feelings of animal nature. Lear, when his distress is at the highest, sympathises with those,

who, amidst the pinchings of want and nakedness, are exposed to the tempestuous elements. I need not put you in mind of the *poor sequestered stag* in 'As you like it:' nor need I say more on a subject, with which you are much better acquainted than I am."

## LETTER CX.

THE REV. DR PORTEUS TO DR BEATTIE.

Lambeth, January 11th, 1776.

"I should have thanked you much sooner for your last letter, of the 17th of October, if I had not waited for a second from you, which you gave me reason to expect in a short time after the first. This, I now conclude, has slipped your memory, or has been rendered impracticable, by your many important avocations, which, at this time of the year, I know, are very numerous. I am afraid, too, bad health has had some share in suspending your correspondence with your friends.

"I congratulate you, most cordially, on the many dangers you have escaped, since we saw

you, both in your own persons, and that of your little boy's. Your escape from the precipice, where your chaise was overturned, was really next to miraculous. At least, I am sure, it affords a strong argument in favour of a particular Providence, and might very well be opposed to all the profound reasonings of Dr Hawkesworth against it. Though, I suppose, the Doctor would have said in your case, as he did of that of the *Endeavour* on the rock, that, instead of interposing to deliver you *out* of that danger, it should have taken care to preserve you from ever coming *into* it. But where, then, would have been that strong sense of God's favour and protection, that gratitude and thankfulness for so visible a mark of it, that entire trust and acquiescence in it for the future, which, I am sure, so singular an accident produces in your mind, and must have produced in every mind, not totally devoid of all religious principles and devout sentiments."

## LETTER CXI.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR JOHN LUNDIE.*

Aberdeen, 17th September, 1775.

"I am much obliged to you for the Latin translation of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green.' It is, as you observe, vastly inferior to Vincent Bourne. I have not had time to read it very critically; but I should imagine, from what I have seen, that the translator has not always hit his author's meaning. I know not on what authority we ascribe this old poem to our King James I. If it be his, which I very much doubt, it is surprising, that he, a king, and who had his education in England, should be so well acquainted with the manners of the common people of Scotland. †

* Minister of the parish of Lonmay in Aberdeenshire, one of the very few remaining of Dr Beattie's earliest friends. My own intimate acquaintance with this venerable and respectable clergyman has subsisted, without interruption, for upwards of half a century.

† In the biographical account of our friend Mr Tytler, I have

## LETTER CXII.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE HONOURABLE MR BARON GORDON.*

Aberdeen, 6th February, 1776.

"I have been very much employed in preparing some little things of mine for the press; other-

assigned some reasons for believing‡ King James I. of Scotland to have been the author of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green.' In reply to Dr Beattie's surprise, how that prince, who had his education in England, could be so well acquainted with the manners of the common people of Scotland, it may be observed, that James was eleven years of age before he left Scotland. He had therefore ample opportunity of being familiarly conversant with the characteristic sports and genius of the people among whom he had been brought up. And as what we see and hear at that early period, makes the deepest and most lasting impression on the mind, even a captivity of nineteen years in England could not obliterate the ideas he had received in early youth, when he returned and took possession of his kingdom, in which he reigned thirteen years, before he was cut off by a foul assassination.

* Cosmo Gordon of Cluny, in Aberdeenshire, one of the Barons of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer in Scotland. Possessed of an ample paternal fortune, which, by œconomy, he had himself considerably improved, he lived with splendid hos-

‡ See Appendix, [O.].

wise I should sooner have acknowledged the favour of your most obliging letter.

"The last time I read Virgil, I took it into my head, that the tenth and eleventh books of the Æneid were not so highly finished as the rest. Every body knows, that the last six books are less perfect than the first six; and I fancied that some of the last six came nearer to perfection than others. I cannot now recollect my reasons for this conceit; but I propose to read the Æneid again, as soon as I have got rid of this publication; and I hope I shall then be in a condition to give something of a reasonable answer to any question you may do me the honour to propose in regard to that matter.

pitality, and very successfully cultivated letters, and courted the society of men of learning. Having the advantage himself of a correct taste, and much classical learning, particularly in the best Roman authors, with whom he was familiarly acquainted, Mr Baron Gordon was a most entertaining companion, as well as excellent correspondent. He was much attached to Dr Beattie, who frequently spent some days with him, at his seat of Cluny, not far from Aberdeen: and to him, jointly with Major Mercer, Mr Arbuthnot, and myself, Dr Beattie dedicated the volume of his son's miscellanies, and the account of his life, which was printed soon after his death. I enjoyed the benefit of Mr Baron Gordon's intimate acquaintance, from a very early period of life. He died in Edinburgh, 19th November, 1800.

"I do not mean, that the tenth or eleventh books are at all imperfect; I only mean, that they fall short of Virgilian perfection. And many passages there are in both, which Virgil himself could not, in my opinion, have made better. Such are the story of Mezentius and Lausus, in the end of the tenth book; and that passage in the eleventh, where old Evander meets the dead body of his son. Mezentius is a character of Virgil's own contrivance, and it is extremely well-drawn: an old tyrant, hated by his people, on account of his impiety and cruelty, yet graced with one amiable virtue, which is sometimes found in very rugged minds, a tender affection for a most deserving son. Filial affection is one of those virtues which Virgil dwells upon with peculiar pleasure; he never omits any opportunity of bringing it in, and he always paints it in the most lovely colours. Æneas, Ascanius, Euryalus, Lausus, are all eminent for this virtue; and Turnus, when he asks his life, asks it only for the sake of his poor old father. Let a young man read the Æneid with taste and attention, and then be an undutiful child if he can. I think there is nothing very distinguishing in Camilla. Perhaps it is not easy to imagine more

than one form of that character. The adventures of her early youth are, however, highly interesting, and wildly romantic. The circumstance of her being, when an infant, thrown across a river, tied to a javelin, is so very singular, that I should suppose Virgil had found it in some history; and, if I mistake not, Plutarch has told such a story of King Pyrrhus. The battle of the horse, in the end of the eleventh book, is well conducted, considering that Virgil was there left to his shifts, and had not Homer to assist him. The speeches of Drances and Turnus are highly animated; and nothing could be better contrived to raise our idea of Æneas, than the answer which Diomede gives to the ambassadors from the Italian army.

"I ought to ask pardon for troubling you with these superficial remarks. But a desire to approve myself worthy of being honoured with your commands, has led me into a subject, for which I am not at present prepared. When I have the pleasure to pay my respects to you at Cluny, which, I hope, will be early in the summer, I shall be glad to talk over these matters, and to correct my opinions by yours."

## LETTER CXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR CAMERON.

Aberdeen, 22d February, 1776.

"The objections to the 'Essay on Truth,' which you hint at, have been often urged by the Edinburgh critics. The reasons, it is not difficult to discover, which make them particularly severe on that performance; but I have met with more candour and less prejudice elsewhere. Even in Edinburgh, there are many worthy and learned persons, who have done me the honour to approve what I did, with a sincere purpose to advance the cause of truth, and do good to society.

"Your good principles, and your good heart, will secure you against the sneers and sophistries of persons, who dislike religion out of prejudice, and are dissatisfied with the evidence of it, which they do not understand, because they have never examined it. Bear always in mind this truth, which admits of the most satisfactory proof: No person of a good heart understands Christianity without wishing it to be true; and no person of a

good judgment ever studied its evidence, impartially, and with a sincere wish that it might be true, who did not really find it so."

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In the course of the year 1776, the new edition, in quarto, of his 'Essay on Truth,' so long expected, made its appearance. Of this publication, by subscription, as the nature and original intention of it had been somewhat misunderstood, he had given an explanation, in a letter to Lady Mayne,* written soon after the subscription was set on foot. Various causes, chiefly his own bad health, had retarded the publication till now. But when at last the book did appear, it amply rewarded the subscribers, and the public, for the delay. To the 'Essay on Truth' he gave a preface, (dated 30th April, 1776,) in which he says, that "This new edition will, it is hoped, be found "less faulty than any of the former. Several in- "accuracies are removed, unnecessary words and "sentences expunged, a few erroneous passages

* See p. 37.

" either cancelled or rectified, and some new-mo-
" delled in the style, which before seemed too
" harshly, or too strongly expressed." " But, in
" regard to the reasons and general principles of
" this Essay, he had not," he says, " seen cause
" to alter his opinion; though he had carefully
" attended to what had been urged against them
" by several ingenious authors. Some objec-
" tions," he adds, " will perhaps be found obvi-
" ated by occasional remarks and amendments,
" interspersed in this edition." He closes his preface, by mentioning an advertisement, prefixed by Mr Hume to a new edition of his 'Essays,' in which that writer seems to disown his *Treatise of Human Nature*, and desires that those " Essays, as then published, may be considered as " containing his philosophical sentiments and prin-
" ciples."

In reply to this advertisement, Dr Beattie, after giving an account of the reasons which had at first induced him to publish the 'Essay on Truth,' goes on to say, " Our author certainly " merits praise for thus publicly disowning, though " late, his *Treatise of Human Nature;* though I " am sorry to observe, from the tenor of his de-
" claration, that he still seems inclined to adhere

"to 'most of the reasonings and principles con-
"tained in that treatise.' But if he has now at
"last renounced any one of his errors, I con-
"gratulate him upon it, with all my heart. He
"has many good, as well as great qualities; and
"I rejoice in the hope, that he may yet be pre-
"vailed on to relinquish, totally, a system, which,
"I should think, would be as uncomfortable to
"him, as it is unsatisfactory to others. In conse-
"quence of his advertisement, I thought it right
"to mitigate, in this edition, some of the cen-
"sures that more especially refer to the *Treatise*
"*of Human Nature:* but as that treatise is still
"extant, and will probably be read as long at
"least as any thing I write, I did not think it
"expedient to make any material change in the
"reasoning, or in the plan of this performance."*

Besides the 'Essay on Truth,' the volume contains three other essays; 'On Poetry and Music, as they affect the Mind.' 'On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition.' 'On the utility of Classical Learning.' Subjects in themselves extremely interesting to every reader of taste, and all of which

* Preface to the edition in 4to of Dr Beattie's Essays, published in 1776, p. ix.—xiv.

he has treated in a very masterly manner.* And to the whole there is prefixed a list of nearly five hundred subscribers, containing the names of many of the most distinguished characters for rank and learning, both in the church and state; an honourable testimony to the merit of Dr Beattie, and highly creditable to the period in which he lived.

## LETTER CXIV.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 2d August, 1776.

"Your manuscript is perfectly safe. I have read it through, and have written a few remarks (very slight ones indeed) on the first part of it. You have treated of some subjects that are highly important, and withal very difficult. That of Providence I have chiefly in my eye. You treat it with great accuracy and clearness; but you seem to me rather too anxious to get to the bot-

* For some farther account of these Essays, see Appendix [Y.]

tom of it, and explain it in such a way as shall leave few or no difficulties unsolved. Now, I presume, this is not necessary. The mysteries of Providence are perhaps unsearchable, in some degree, to all created beings. We are not obliged in these matters to be *wise above what is written*; and I know not whether a habit of thinking too deeply on certain points, may not rather tend to darken, than to illuminate the understanding. It certainly produces a facility of devising objections, which, though we see they are frivolous, may give us a great deal of trouble. I wish my son to believe what the Scripture declares concerning Providence; but I would not wish him to enter so far into the subject, as ever to be puzzled in his attempts to reconcile Divine decrees with contingency, or the Divine prescience with human liberty. This, however, is only *my* opinion; I would not urge it upon you, and perhaps, if I shall ever regain my former health and spirits, I may have less disinclination to these subjects, than I have at present. But I will endeavour to explain myself on this point more intelligibly hereafter."

In the following letter to Mr Cameron, Dr Beattie speaks of a plan, at that time in agitation, of a new and improved poetical version of the Psalms, for the use of the Church of Scotland, of which more will be said hereafter.

## LETTER CXV.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR CAMERON.

Aberdeen, 4th August, 1776.

"I approve greatly of your design of versifying some passages of Scripture, for the enlargement of our Psalmody. You cannot employ your muse in a way more honourable to yourself, or more useful to your country. The specimen you sent to me, I think extremely good. I returned it, as you desired, to the gentleman, after marking, with a pencil, a few criticisms which then occurred to me. You judge very rightly in

regard to the style that is most proper in these compositions. It should be perfectly simple and perspicuous, without any quaintness, and free from all superfluous epithets. At the same time, it should be harmonious and elegant, and equally remote from rusticity and affectation. In a word, it should have dignity to please the best judges, and a plainness adapted to the meanest capacity.

"I received a letter some time ago, from the Secretary of the Committee for the enlargement of the Psalmody, to which I meant to have returned an answer, but have hitherto been prevented by bad health, and an unusual hurry of business. The business is now almost over, but, unhappily, I have not recovered my health: and therefore, I fear, it will be a considerable time before I be in a condition to write that answer, which will be a pretty long one, and contain some remarks on the several English versions of the Psalms, with a proposal for a new version to be made, by collecting all the best passages of the other versions.

"The ground-work of this new version, ought (I think) to be that which we now use in the Church of Scotland, and which, according to my

notions in these matters, is the best that has yet appeared in English; though it is neither so elegant in the language, nor so perspicuous in the meaning, as it might easily be made. Tate and Brady are too quaint, and where the Psalmist rises to sublimity, (which is very often the case,) are apt to sink into bombast; yet Tate and Brady have many good passages, especially in those psalms that contain simple enunciations of moral truth. Sternhold and Hopkins are in general bad, but have given us a few stanzas that are wonderfully fine, and which ought to be adopted in this new version. Watts, though often elegant, and in many respects valuable, is too paraphrastical: from him, I would propose, that a good deal should be taken; but I would not follow him implicitly. King James's version, which is the basis of that which we use in Scotland, is, considering the age and the author, surprisingly good; and in many places has the advantage of ours, notwithstanding that this was intended as an improvement upon it. Now my scheme is, to take the best passages of these versions, and out of them to make a new version. You say, it would be a motley piece of work, if so many au-

thors were concerned in it. I answer, no; if the collection were judiciously made. Besides, the Psalms themselves are the work of several authors, David, Asaph, Moses, &c.—Where then is the absurdity of translating them in the manner I hint at? The version I speak of, I mean only to propose, and give some hints for conducting it; I am not at all qualified for such a work. My ignorance of the Hebrew tongue is alone sufficient disqualification.

"I had no hand in the collection of *Paraphrases* of some passages of Scripture, published about twenty or thirty years ago, and sometimes printed in the end of our Psalm-books. That collection appeared long before I was of age to attempt any sort of composition, either in verse or prose."

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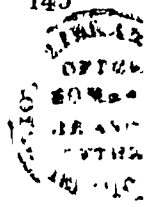
On the 15th August, 1776, Mr Hume died in Edinburgh, after having been afflicted for more than a twelvemonth with a complaint which he

himself believed would prove fatal. His death, therefore, he had foreseen for some considerable time; yet his cheerfulness, and composure of mind, remained unabated, and he even exerted, at times, a playful humour, not altogether decorous in so solemn a situation.*

The world was naturally not unsolicitous to see, whether Mr Hume, in his dying moments, would express any sentiments different from those which he had published in his philosophical writings. But although he retained the full possession of his faculties to the last, he preserved a most cautious silence on that subject, and never uttered a word that could indicate whether any change had taken place in his opinions, or not. There is every reason to believe, however, that his sentiments remained still the same; for he left for publication, a treatise, entitled, 'Dialogues on Natural Religion,' of a similar strain with those which had been printed during his lifetime.

* Dr Adam Smith's Letter to Mr Strahan, p. xxi.



The following letter was written on occasion of the death of the Reverend Mr Carr, the worthy clergyman of the Episcopal Chapel in Edinburgh, which I attend. The congregation having determined to erect a monument to the memory of their deceased pastor, committed the execution of it to Mr Arbuthnot and me. Being anxious to avail ourselves of Dr Beattie's aid, we sent him an inscription, which seemed to be such as was wished for; but of which we requested the favour of his correction.

## LETTER CXVII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Peterhead, 10th September, 1776.

"I am no stranger to Mr Carr's character, whose death, though I had not the honour of his

acquaintance, was a real affliction to me; for I have long considered him as one of the most valuable men of the age. I have heard him preach, and admired his gentle and pathetic eloquence. But to his merits as a preacher, great as they were, the lustre of his private character was still superior. The death of such a man is a real loss to society. I sympathise particularly with you, my dear Sir, on this occasion; as I have often heard you speak of Mr Carr with such warmth of affection, as showed you to be deeply interested in his welfare.

"I have carefully read over the two inscriptions, * which, with a few trifling remarks of my own, I return enclosed, lest you should not have kept a copy. I think them both excellent; and I believe it would puzzle a better critic than I am, to assign any good reason for preferring the

* The one written by Mr Arbuthnot, the other by me. From these two, by the help of Dr Beattie's criticisms, we prepared the inscription, which is engraved on a marble tablet, at the south door of our chapel, and of which the following is a copy. It does no more than justice to his character. †

† For some further account of this excellent person, see Appendix [Z.]

one to the other. The elders of your congregation are the only persons who ought to determine

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*Near this Place are deposited*
*The Remains*
*of*
THE REVEREND GEORGE CARR,
*Senior Clergyman of this Chapel;*
*In whom*
*Meekness and Moderation,*
*Unaffected Piety,*
*and*
*Universal Benevolence,*
*Were equally and eminently conspicuous.*

*After having faithfully discharged the Duties*
*of*
*His Sacred Function,*
*During Thirty-nine Years,*
*He died,*
*On the 18th August, 1776,*
*In the 71st Year of his Age,*
*Beloved, Honoured, Lamented!*

*His Congregation,*
*Deeply sensible of the Loss they have sustained*
*By the Death of this excellent Person,*
*By whose mild yet pathetic Eloquence,*
*By whose exemplary yet engaging Manners,*
*They have been so long instructed in the Duties,*
*and*
*Animated to the Practice,*
*of*
*Pure Religion,*
*Have erected this Monument,*
*To record*
*The Virtues of the Dead,*
*and*
*Gratitude of the Living.*

this matter; for they are best acquainted with the merits of the deceased, and they best know what sort of inscription they would wish to see on the walls of their church. For me to attempt to make any material improvement on either, would be great folly, as well as presumption. I am in doubt whether it be necessary to mention the suddenness of Mr Carr's death.* To so good a man, it is of no importance whether he expire by degrees, or at once. In the common opinion, *sudden death* is an evil; and as such it is considered in the litany of the church; and such it would be, no doubt, to the greater part of mankind; but to Mr Carr, it was rather a good than an evil. But my notions in this respect may perhaps be whimsical, and therefore I will not trouble you with them.

"You judge very rightly of Dr Campbell's book:† it is indeed a most ingenious performance, and contains more curious matter, on certain topics of criticism, than any other book I am acquainted with.

* Mr Carr's death was instantaneous; as he was preparing to officiate on a Sunday morning, as usual.

† Philosophy of Rhetoric.

"Lord Monboddo's third volume * I have not yet seen. It will certainly be full of learning and ingenuity; but perhaps the author's excessive admiration of the Greek writers may lead him into some paradoxes, and make him too insensible to the merits of modern literature. I have a great respect for Lord Monboddo; I know him to be a learned and a worthy man; and I am greatly concerned to see him adopt some opinions, which, I fear, are not very salutary.

"But I know nobody that has less occasion than yourself to study these authors, with a view to the formation of a good style. I beg your partiality to me may not so blind you to the faults of mine, as ever to make you think of studying it for a pattern. You are pleased to pay me compliments on this head, which I do not by any means deserve. The style of my letters, whatever you and Mr Arbuthnot may say, is not a good style; it has nothing of that accuracy, that ease, or that simplicity, which it ought to have. Nay, in the prose I have printed, my ex-

* Origin and Progress of Language. See Vol. I. p. 30.

pression, after all the pains I have taken about it, is not what I wish it to be: it is too pompous, and, I fear, too visibly elaborate; and there is often a harshness and a stiffness in it, which I would fain avoid, but cannot. Even provincial improprieties, I know, I am not proof against, though few people have been more careful to keep clear of them. The longer I study English, the more I am satisfied that Addison's prose is the best model; and if I were to give advice to a young man on the subject of English style, I would desire him to read that author day and night. I know not what may be the opinion of others; but, in my own judgment, that part of my writings, which in the article of style has the least demerit, is *An Essay on Laughter*, which is now in the press; yet perhaps my partiality to it may be owing to this circumstance, that it is the last thing I corrected."

The following letter to me was written after my recovery from a dangerous illness. It contains some important observations on a very solemn subject.

## LETTER CXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d January, 1777.

"I shall not attempt, my dear Sir, to tell you, what a transition from grief to happiness I lately experienced, on occasion of your illness and recovery. Your own heart will teach you to conceive it, but I have no words to express it.

"The account you give me of your thoughts and feelings, when your disorder was at the height, is very interesting. That *insensibility* which you complain of, and blame yourself for, is, I believe, common in all similar cases; and a merciful ap-

pointment of Providence it is. By deadening those affections, to which life is indebted for its principal charm, it greatly alleviates the pangs of dissolution. In fact, the pains of death to a man in health appear much more formidable than to a dying man. This at least is my opinion; and I have been led into it by what has been observed, of some people's displaying a fortitude, or composure, at the hour of death, who had all their lives been remarkably timorous and weak-minded. The proximate cause of this, I take to be that same *stupor* which gradually steals upon our senses, as our dissolution draws near. And that the approach of death should produce this *stupor*, needs not surprise us, when we consider, that the approach even of sleep has something of the same effect; and that the keenness of our passions and feelings, in general, depends very much, even when we are in tolerable health, upon our bodily habit. If sleep is found to disorder our reason, and give a peculiar wildness to our fancy; if memory may be hurt, as it certainly has been, by a blow on the head; if a superabundance of certain bodily humours give rise to certain passions in the mind; if drunkenness divest a man, for a time, of his character, and even of many of his

favourite opinions (for I have known a staunch Presbyterian, who was always a Roman Catholic in his liquor); if even a full meal gives a languor to the mind, and impairs a little our faculties of invention and judgment; we have good reason to think, that the connection between our soul and body is very intimate; and may therefore admit the probability of what I now advance, namely, that when the powers and energies of the human body are disordered by the near approach of death, it is scarcely possible that the soul should perceive or feel with its wonted acuteness. The *stupor*, therefore, you mention, was something in which your will had no part, but the natural and necessary effect of a cause purely material. I ask pardon for all this philosophy; which, however, I cannot conclude, without one remark more; which is, that this doctrine, if true, ought to be matter of comfort to a good man, as well as an alarm to such as are not of that character. To the former, it promises an easy dissolution; and it ought to teach the latter, that, of all places on earth, a death-bed is the most improper for devotion or repentance.

"You smile, perhaps, at the seriousness of these remarks; but I am led into them by read-

ing your letter, and considering the occasion of it. I must repeat, that you are a very severe judge of yourself. You are conscious, you say, of many faults, which the world does not see in you. But you ought to remember, that every man is frail and fallible; and the virtue even of the best man must, in order to appear meritorious at the great tribunal, have something added to it, which man cannot bestow.

"I must put a stop, however, to these grave remarks; and, to descend at once from a very important to a most trifling subject, I shall now speak a word or two concerning my own works.

"It is very kind in you to speak so favourably of these 'Essays.'* You will see I have not laid claim to much originality in these performances. My principal purpose was to make my subject plain and entertaining, and, as often as I could, the vehicle of moral instruction; a purpose to which every part of the philosophy of the human mind, and indeed of science in gene-

* On Poetry and Music, as they affect the Mind.
On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition.
On the Utility of Classical Learning. Printed in 1776.
See Appendix, [AA.]

ral, may, and ought, in my opinion, to be made in some degree subservient. I was very much on my guard against paradoxes; yet I expect that many of my opinions, those especially that relate to music and classical learning, will meet with opposition. Mr Tytler writes me word, that he cannot admit all my doctrine on the subject of music; but, if I rightly understand what he has said very briefly on that subject, I should imagine, that, if he would favour that part of my book with a second perusal, he would find that his notions and mine are not very different. To me, indeed, they do not seem to differ at all. I should be sorry if they did; as I believe he knows more of that, as well as of other matters, than I do. I am already sensible of several inaccuracies and defects in my book; for I was in a most miserable state of health when I sent it to the press: and I know not how it is, that I can never judge rightly of my own style, till I see it in print. If the book comes to a second edition, and if I have health to make any alterations, there are many things which must be corrected. I should be glad to hear how it takes with your people in general.

"You may believe Dr Porteus's advancement* gives me great pleasure. It was what I did expect, though I am sure he did not. He says in his last letter, "I have reason to believe, that I "owe this advancement principally to the good- "ness of their Majesties, who have been graci- "ously pleased to think me deserving of much "higher honours than I had ever the presump- "tion to look up to." When I was in England in 1775, the Doctor told me, that he was not particularly known to the King at that time; but I told him, I had good reason to believe, that his Majesty esteemed him very highly. Indeed, I know no man that better deserves to wear the mitre. He is not older than I am; and I think he looks much younger: but he is exemplary in the discharge of his duty as a clergyman, a cheerful pleasant companion, and of the gentlest manners; he is, withal, an excellent scholar, a most elegant writer, and a man of business. He, and Dr Hurd, Bishop of Litchfield, † are, I think, the best preachers I ever heard. Indeed, before I heard them, I cannot say that I distinctly

* To the Bishoprick of Chester.

† Now Bishops of London and Worcester.

knew what true pulpit-eloquence was. The King seems determined to promote to the Episcopal bench such clergymen only as are most distinguished for piety and learning. Dr Markham, now Archbishop of York, and the present Bishops of Chester and Litchfield, had not originally any other influence than what their own merit gave them. Dr Hurd was never at Court till he went to kiss the King's hand, on being nominated to the see of Litchfield."

## LETTER CXVIII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 19th February, 1777.

"I have now, my dear Sir, read over your papers* with all the attention I am capable of, and have made a few, a very few, slight remarks in the margin. The perusal has given me very great pleasure, and I beg you will send me the rest as

* "Letters on the Religious Belief and Practical Duties of a Christian," written by the author of these Memoirs for the instruction of his children, still in MS.

soon as you conveniently can. Every thing you say in regard to the evidence of religion has my most hearty concurrence; one or two sentences or phrases excepted, which are not at all material. What these are, you will see when I return the papers. I am clearly of opinion, that these papers will make a most valuable addition to the book. Mr Jenyns's late treatise, I observe, is a favourite of yours. There is, indeed, a great deal in it of very solid and ingenious remark; and, I am convinced, it will do much good. It were, perhaps, to be wished, that the author had made fewer concessions to the adversary, and spoken with more respect of the *external* evidences. But when one takes up a favourite hypothesis, or argument, it is hardly possible to avoid carrying it rather too far;—such is the weakness of human nature. I mean not to object to Mr Jenyns's favourite argument; it is surely most satisfactory to every candid mind; and he has done it more justice than any other author I am acquainted with. I only wish his plan would have allowed him to touch upon the external evidences, which ought never to be overlooked by those who would acquit themselves as the champions of Christianity. I began

a little treatise, some years ago, on the evidences of our religion, but have never finished it; and indeed Mr J.'s treatise has in part superseded mine. My meaning was, to make the subject plain and entertaining, and suited to all capacities, especially to those of young people. Like Mr Jenyns, I intended only a little book: but it must have been larger than his, because I would have considered both the *external* and the *internal* evidence."*

## LETTER CXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

——— 2d October, 1777.

"I am much obliged to your Lordship for your entertaining account of the ancient city of Chester and its neighbourhood. It must certainly be, as you observe, well-worthy the traveller's attention; and if it is ever my fortune to revisit the west of England, I shall be inexcusable if I

* This he afterwards most admirably accomplished in his "Evidences of the Christian Religion," published in 1786.

do not direct my course to a place, which I am now, on many accounts, ambitious to be acquainted with.

"Of literary matters I can say nothing. The Doctor commanded me, on pain of death, to abstain wholly from writing, and to read nothing but novels, or such books as require no attention. I have followed the prescription most punctually; and, since my fever in the spring, have not written half a dozen pages, (letters included,) nor read any thing but 'Don Quixote,' Spenser's 'Fairy Queen,' and 'Horace,' which last I have read over three times. As I have not read Dr Robertson's last work, I cannot form any opinion about it. Lord Kaimes has published a book of agriculture, which, they say, is the best of all his works. Dr Campbell lately printed another excellent sermon, preached at Edinburgh before the 'Society for propagating Christian 'Knowledge.' The subject is, 'The success of 'the first preaching of the gospel, a proof of its 'truth.' I shall have the honour to send your Lordship a copy of this sermon as soon as I return to Aberdeen. I have read Captain Cooke's preface, which gives me a very high opinion of the author: I wish for an opportunity to read

the whole book. When a man of sense and spirit publishes the history of his own affairs, the world is a thousand times better instructed than by the most elaborate compositions of the mere book-maker."

## LETTER CXX.

### THE BISHOP OF CHESTER TO DR BEATTIE.

Hunton, November 28th, 1777.

"During our stay here, Dr Robertson's 'History of America' has been part of our evening's amusement. He is, without dispute, a very judicious compiler, and very elegant writer, and seems to have taken great pains in this work to collect all the information that could possibly be obtained from books and manuscripts, of which he has consulted a considerable number. Of these, some of the most curious were communicated to him by my friend, Lord Grantham,* am-

* The editor has lately been informed, from good authority, that the manuscript in question was procured, not by Lord Grantham, but by his chaplain, Mr Waddilove, (now Dean of Ri-

bassador at Madrid, and his chaplain, Mr Waddilove. But still the grand source of original information was not opened to him; I mean the letters and papers written to the Spanish court by the first conquerors of America, and all the authentic documents relative to that transaction, which were collected by Philip the Second, and deposited amongst the archives of the Spanish monarchy, at a place called Simanca, near Valladolid, above a hundred miles from Madrid. To these he could obtain no access; and till these are produced to the world, I shall never suppose that we have any history of South America that can be absolutely relied upon. As far, however, as Dr Robertson's materials go, he has set them off to the best advantage, and has enlivened them by many ingenious and useful observations on the natural and moral history of the Aborigines of that country. He has, however, I think, missed some opportunities, which this part of his work threw in his way, of drawing a comparison between the state of the savage and of the Chris-

pon,) aided by the friendship of Don Francesco Peres Bayer; and that the collation was not only made under the direction of Mr Waddilove, but that two books of it were actually collated by himself.

tian world. He attributes the difference between them solely to the improvements of civil society. I am of opinion, that the gospel has had a large share in this happy change; and it would have been of infinite service to religion, to have had all its beneficial consequences set forth by so fine a pen as Dr Robertson's. Such incidental arguments in favour of religion, interspersed occasionally in works of acknowledged merit and reputation, are, perhaps, of more general use than professed defences of it. The enemies of Christianity have long taken this method of undermining it, and its friends therefore should not be backward in taking the same means to recommend it. Mr Gibbon, and the Abbé Raynal, have, more especially, distinguished themselves by this species of hostility; for which reason I am sorry that Dr Robertson has paid them both such high compliments as he has done.

"I hear of nothing new and important in the literary world that is likely to make its appearance this winter, except a new translation of Isaiah, by Bishop Lowth; of which the public has raised its expectations very high, from the known abilities and learning of the author. This, I believe, is in very great forwardness. There is

also an edition of 'Strabo,' by Mr Falkner, a gentleman of Chester, every way equal to the undertaking, which is pretty far advanced. Archbishop Markham shewed me, the other day, a collation for him, of a manuscript in the Escurial, made under the direction of Canonico Bayer, and procured by the assistance of Lord Grantham."

## LETTER CXXI.

### DR BEATTIE TO SYLVESTER DOUGLAS, ESQ. NOW LORD GLENBERVIE. *

Aberdeen, 5th January, 1778.

"I am much entertained with your plan of writing upon the Scottish barbarisms, accent, &c. It is a very extensive one; and, in your hands, will be very entertaining and useful. Most of the

* Between whom and Dr Beattie an intimacy, contracted in early life, subsisted mutually, and without interruption, for a long course of years. I also claim the distinction of ranking Lord Glenbervie among the number of those who have honoured me with their regard; and he and I are now two of the very few surviving associates of Dr Beattie's early friendship.

topics you mention, have occasionally engrossed my attention. I have written many sheets upon Scotticism, and the structure and rules of our verse, and how far the English tongue is attainable by a native of Scotland, and in what respects it is not attainable, (I mean, a person who does not go to live in England till he is grown up.) I once intended to *publish* something on English prosody and versification, but, I believe, my literary pursuits are all over.

*Vos, O quibus integri ævi—*
*Me si cælicolæ voluissent——*

The greatest difficulty in acquiring the art of *writing* English, is one which I have seldom heard our countrymen complain of, and which I was never sensible of till I had spent some years in labouring to acquire that art. It is, to give a *vernacular* cast to the English we write. I must explain myself. We who live in Scotland are obliged to study English from books, like a dead language. Accordingly, when we write, we write it like a dead language, which we understand, but cannot speak; avoiding, perhaps, all ungrammatical expressions, and even the barbarisms of our

country, but, at the same time, without communicating that neatness, ease, and softness of phrase, which appears so conspicuously in Addison, Lord Lyttelton, and other elegant English authors. Our style is stately and unwieldy, and clogs the tongue in pronunciation, and smells of the lamp. We are slaves to the language we write, and are continually afraid of committing *gross* blunders; and, when an easy, familiar, idiomatical phrase occurs, dare not adopt it, if we recollect no authority, for fear of Scotticisms. In a word, *we* handle English, as a person who cannot fence handles a sword; continually afraid of hurting ourselves with it, or letting it fall, or making some awkward motion that shall betray our ignorance. An English author of learning is the master, not the slave, of his language, and wields it gracefully, because he wields it with ease, and with full assurance that he has the command of it.

"In order to get over this difficulty, which I fear is, in some respects, insuperable after all, I have been continually poring upon Addison, the best parts of Swift, Lord Lyttelton, &c. The ear is of great service in these matters; and I am convinced the greater part of Scottish authors

hurt their style by admiring and imitating one another. At Edinburgh, it is currently said by your critical people, that Hume, Robertson, &c. write English better than the English themselves; than which, in my judgment, there cannot be a greater absurdity. I would as soon believe that Thuanus wrote better Latin than Cicero or Cæsar, and that Buchanan was a more elegant poet than Virgil or Horace. In my rhetorical lectures, and whenever I have occasion to speak on this subject to those who pay any regard to my opinion, I always maintain a contrary doctrine, and advise those to study English authors, who would acquire a good English style.

"I agree with you, that many of the vulgar words used in Scotland may be traced to the Saxon, German, Dutch, &c. The French too, and the Erse, come in for their share, especially the former. French etymologies abound most in the counties to the south of Aberdeen, in Mearns, Angus, &c. where, you know, the natives, in their pronunciation, have the sound of the French *U*. I know of no etymological dictionary of this dialect; but a great deal of the knowledge to be expected in such a dictionary may be found in Ray's 'Collection of English Proverbs,' but espe-

cially in Ruddiman's 'Glossary to Bishop Douglas's Virgil.' This last is a most learned piece of lexicography. You will see it in that edition of 'Gavin Douglas,' which is printed at Edinburgh, in folio, in 1710. I need not tell you, that the Scottish dialect is different in almost every province. The common people of Aberdeen speak a language that would scarce be understood in Fife; and how much the Buchan dialect differs from that of Lothian, may be seen by comparing Ramsay's 'Gentle Shepherd' with 'Ajax's Speech to the Grecian Knabbs,' which you will no doubt remember to have seen in your youth. I have attended so much to this matter, that I think I could know by his speech, a native of Banffshire, Buchan, Aberdeen, Dee-side, Mearns, Angus, Lothian, and Fife, as well as of Ross-shire and Inverness.

"I am inclined to think, that Erse was once the universal language of Scotland; for you find, all over the Lowlands, that the names of the old places are almost all derived from that language. It is remarkable, that on the northern side of that great hollow, or *strath*, which we call the *How of the Mearns*, the names of places are generally Erse, and on the south side English or

Saxon. This seems to prove, that the former district was first inhabited, which is indeed probable from other circumstances; for it fronts the sun, and is sheltered from the north wind by the Grampian mountains."

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As an introduction to the following letter, it may be proper to mention, that, not long after Garrick's celebration of the jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon, in honour of Shakespeare, in the year 1769, some gentlemen at Edinburgh proposed also to celebrate a jubilee in honour of our countryman, Thomson. But there not appearing a sufficient number of persons of any note to give respectability to such a meeting, the idea was laid aside. A few years afterwards, Mr Craig, an architect of some merit, who designed the plan of the New Town of Edinburgh, and the hall of the College of Physicians there, a nephew of Thomson's, formed the design of erecting a monument to his memory, at the village of Ednam, on the banks of the Tweed, the place of Thomson's

birth, and Dr Beattie was requested to write an inscription. The site of the proposed monument was the summit of Ednam hill. This eminence slopes regularly and beautifully to the surrounding valley, and commands a most extensive prospect; so that the intended monument would have been seen for many miles in every direction. But this intention was frustrated by Craig's death. In order, however, that the memory of the poet might not remain altogether unhonoured, several gentlemen, who reside in the neighbourhood of Ednam, have formed themselves into a society, which, for some years past, has met there annually on the birth-day of Thomson.

The following letter of Dr Beattie's, besides the inscription, contains some excellent remarks on that species of composition.

## LETTER CXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 22d July, 1778.

"Mr Craig does me too much honour. I am proud to be thought of so favourably by so ingenious an artist, and by the nephew of a man who was an honour to his country and to mankind; and to whose writings I am under very particular obligations: for if I have any true relish for the beauties of nature, I may say with truth, that it was from Virgil and from Thomson that I caught it. The memory of this amiable poet cannot be dearer to any person than it is to me; and I should be heartily sorry, if the monument, to be erected for him, were not such, in every respect, as he himself would have approved. Mr Craig will, I am sure, make it such in the architecture; and, if he follow his own ideas, in the inscription too. But, since he does me the honour to desire to have my opinion, I shall give it with the greatest sincerity. I think, then, that all public inscriptions, whether intended for

tombs, or cenotaphs; or bridges, or any other public building, are made with a view to catch the eye of the traveller, and convey to him, not the wit of the composer, but some authentic information in regard to the object that draws his attention, and is supposed to raise his curiosity. On this principle, all such writings ought to be perfectly simple, and true, and as concise as the subject and language will admit. This is the character of the Greek and Roman inscriptions, which it is a pity the moderns have so rarely imitated: for, in my mind, nothing is more barbarous than those mixtures of verse and prose, of Latin and English, of narration and commonplace morality, which appear in our churches and church-yards, and other public places. A Gothic arch, supported by Corinthian pillars, or a statue with painted cheeks and a hat and wig, is not a greater absurdity. To set up a pillar, with a Latin inscription, for the information of those who understand no language but English, is not less absurd. I never heard of a Greek inscription at Rome, nor of a Latin one at Athens. Latin is perhaps a more durable language than English, and may therefore be used in those inscriptions that are put on the foundation-stones

of bridges, and hid under ground; for these, it may be presumed, will not be read till a thousand years hence, when all our modern languages will probably be unintelligible. But I cannot but think, that an English inscription, exposed to wind and weather in this climate, will be understood as long as it can be read. I would, therefore, humbly propose, that what is intended for Thomson's monument should be in English, the tongue which he spoke, and to which his writings do so much honour, and the tongue which all travellers who visit Ednam may be supposed to understand: that it should be simple and concise, not in verse, (for this appears more like ostentation of wit than an authentic record,) but in prose, well modulated, totally free from all quaintness, superfluous words, and flowery ornaments,—something to the same purpose with the following, and in a similar style. But observe, that as I do not mean to enter the lists with either of the two great writers,* who have already prepared inscriptions for this work, I offer the following rather as a hint towards one, than as a finished performance. And let me remark, by

* Who these were, does not appear.

the way, that I have been more devoted to this simplicity of style in public inscriptions, ever since I read a verbose and flowery one in Latin, near the banks of Loch Lomond, to the memory of Dr Smollett.

JAMES THOMSON,
*Author of* The Seasons, *and other excellent Poems;*
*Which promote*
*Piety, Patriotism, Benevolence, and the Love of Nature,*
*Wherever the English Tongue is understood,*
*Was born in this Village,* 11*th September,* 1700,
*Died* 27*th August,* 1748,
*And is buried in the Church of Richmond in Surrey.*

*To do honour to the Place of his Birth,*
*And as a Testimony of veneration*
*For so amiable a Poet,*
*And so illustrious a Kinsman,*
*This Monument* is erected*
*By his Nephew,* JAMES CRAIG, *Architect.*

"I would have no quotations or verses on the monument; and I beg leave to say, that the four which you have taken from the epilogue, are not so very elegant in the expression as might be wished, though the meaning is good, and perfectly true.

"I beg my best respects to Sir William For-

* Or pillar.

bes, to whom I will write soon, but cannot at present; as he will see this letter, I consider myself as writing to you both. I am much obliged to you for giving me so candidly your opinion of my two psalms. It has determined me to lay aside all thoughts of a project, which, though my health forbade me to undertake it, had been too much in my head of late. For I see now, that my plan, even though executed to my mind, would not please those whom I most wished to please, who best deserved to be pleased, and who, from their partiality to me, would not be easily displeased with any work of mine. I am not sure whether I shall ever publish the letter to Dr Blair, unless I were to make some additions to it, to justify the preference which I give to the Assembly's metre psalms;* I mean to their plan, for the execution has all the faults that Sir William Forbes mentions. In England, they commonly make use of a corrected edition of Sternhold and Hopkins; and I confess I must agree with them so far, as to think *that* rudeness, which is the effect of simplicity, more

* That version authorised by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

pardonable than those finical embellishments that are owing to affectation. But I cannot at present enter upon the reasons that would determine me to reject all paraphrastical additions and flowery ornaments in a version of the Psalms, and adhere to that manly (I ought to have said *divine*) and most expressive simplicity, which characterise the original."*

## LETTER CXXIII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 22d November, 1778.

"During this long confinement, I have often been forced to have recourse to my pen and ink, in order to forget my anxiety for a few minutes. But though I could transcribe and correct a little, I was in a very bad state for composition. However, since March last, I have written, in a fair hand, about 370 pages. In this collection, there are (besides other matters) three essays, on 'Me-

* See what he himself has said on this subject, in Letter II. p. 63. Vol. I.

mory,' on 'Imagination,' and on 'Dreaming,' on which I set some value. I shall read them to my class very soon; they will make about ten lectures, of an hour each. In treating of Memory and Imagination, I have endeavoured, not only to ascertain their phenomena and laws, but also to propose rules for improving the former faculty, and for regulating the latter. The view I have taken of Dreaming is new, so far as I know. I have attempted to trace up some of the appearances of that mysterious mode of perception to their proximate causes; and to prove, that it is, in many respects, useful to the human constitution. On all subjects of this nature, I have constantly received more information from my own experience than from books.

"One of the next faculties that come in my way, is Conscience, or the moral faculty; on which I have, in writing, a great number of unfinished observations. If I live to finish what I intend on this subject, I shall probably attempt a confutation of several erroneous principles that have been adopted by modern writers of morals, but without naming any names; and it is not unlikely, that I may interweave the substance of what I wrote long ago, at greater length, on the

Unchangeableness of Moral Truth. But winter will be over before I can seriously set about it; and perhaps the state of my health may oblige me to drop the scheme altogether. However, I do not repent what I have hitherto done, in transcribing and correcting my lectures; for I have been careful to make it an amusement rather than a task; whence I have reason to think, that my health has not been injured by it.

"I have been reading lately a most extraordinary work, which I did read once before, but (I know not how) had totally forgotten. The 'History of Benvenuto Cellini,' a Florentine goldsmith and designer, translated from the Italian, by Thomas Nugent. There is something in it so singularly characteristical, that it is impossible to reject the whole as fabulous, and yet it is equally impossible not to reject a great part of it as such. To reconcile this, I would suppose, that the work itself strongly evinces, that the author must have been an ingenious, hot-headed, vain, audacious man; and that the violence of his passions, the strength of his superstition, and the disasters into which he plunged himself, made him mad in the end. We know, that the Italians, of the sixteenth century, were very ingenious in every

thing that relates to drawing and designing; but it cannot be believed, that popes, emperors, and kings, were so totally engrossed with those matters as Signior Cellini represents them. If you have never seen the book, I would recommend it as a curiosity, from which I promise that you will receive amusement. Nay, in regard to the manners of those times, there is even some instruction in it."

## LETTER CXXIV.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.*

Aberdeen, 10th January, 1779.

"Major Mercer made me very happy with the news he brought from Gordon-Castle, particular-

* Jane, Duchess of Gordon, daughter of Sir William Maxwell of Monreith, Bart. in the county of Wigton, in Scotland. Her Grace, the honour of whose intimate acquaintance I have long had the happiness to enjoy, distinguished Dr Beattie, during many years, by her friendship and correspondence, which were returned, on his part, by every respectful sentiment of esteem and admiration. While he was charmed by her beauty, the brilliancy of her wit, and her cultivated understanding, the Duchess of Gordon well knew how to appretiate the talents and

ly when he assured me that your Grace was in perfect health. He told me too, that your solitude was at an end for some time; which, I confess, I was not sorry to hear. Seasons of recollection may be useful; but when one begins to find pleasure in sighing over Young's 'Night Thoughts' in a corner, it is time to shut the book, and return to the company. I grant, that, while the mind is in a certain state, those gloomy ideas give exquisite delight; but their effect resembles that of intoxication upon the body; they may produce a temporary fit of feverish exultation, but qualms, and weakened nerves, and depression of spirits, are the consequence. I have great respect for Dr Young, both as a man and as a poet; I used to devour his 'Night Thoughts' with a satisfaction not unlike that which, in my

the virtues of Dr Beattie; and these letters, selected from a great number, during a long epistolary intercourse, strongly evince the warmth of his gratitude for her unremitting kindness and attention on every occasion. Indeed, so tenderly solicitous was the Duchess of Gordon at all times to sooth his sorrows, and dissipate those gloomy ideas that preyed upon his mind, that he found consolation and relief in the free interchange of thoughts, with which her good nature delighted to indulge him: And he has often been heard to say, that he was never more happy than in the society he found at Gordon-Castle.

younger years, I have found in walking alone in a church-yard, or in a wild mountain, by the light of the moon, at midnight. Such things may help to soften a rugged mind; and I believe I might have been the better for them. But your Grace's heart is already 'too feelingly alive to each fine impulse;' and, therefore, to you I would recommend gay thoughts, cheerful books, and sprightly company: I might have said *company* without any limitation, for wherever you are, the company must be sprightly. Excuse this obtrusion of advice. We are all physicians who have arrived at forty; and, as I have been studying the anatomy of the human mind these fifteen years and upwards, I think I ought to be something of a soul-doctor by this time.

"When I first read Young, my heart was broken to think of the poor man's afflictions. Afterwards, I took it in my head, that where there was so much lamentation, there could not be excessive suffering; and I could not help applying to him sometimes those lines of a song,

"Believe me, the shepherd but feigns;
"He's wretched, to show he has wit."

On talking with some of Dr Young's particular friends in England, I have since found that my conjecture was right; for that, while he was composing the 'Night Thoughts,' he was really as cheerful as any other man.

"I well know the effect of what your Grace expresses so properly, of a cold *yes* returned to a warm sentiment. One meets with it often in company; and, in most companies, with nothing else. And yet it is perhaps no great loss, upon the whole, that one's enthusiasm does not always meet with an adequate return. A disappointment of this sort, now and then, may have, upon the mind, an effect something like that of the cold bath upon the body; it gives a temporary shock, but is followed by a very delightful glow as soon as one gets into a society of the right temperature. They resemble too in another respect. A cool companion may be disagreeable at first, but in a little time he becomes less so; and at our first plunge we are impatient to get out of the bath, but if we stay in it a minute or two, we lose the sense of its extreme coldness. Would not your Grace think, from what I am saying, or rather preaching, that I was the most

social man upon earth? And yet I am become almost an hermit: I have not made four visits these four months. Not that I am running away, or have any design to run away, from the world. It is, I rather think, the world that is running away from me.

"No character was ever more fully, or more concisely drawn, than that of Major Mercer* by your Grace. I was certain you would like him the more, the longer you knew him. With more learning than any other man of my acquaintance, he has all the playfulness of a school-boy; and unites the wit and the wisdom of Montesquieu with the sensibility of Rousseau, and the generosity of Tom Jones. Your Grace has, likewise, a very just idea of Mrs Mercer.† She is most amiable, and well accomplished; and, in goodness and generosity of nature, is not inferior even to the Major himself. I met her the other day, and was happy to find her in better health than I think she has been for some years. This will be most

* See p. 35. Vol. I. and Appendix [BB.] He was at that time major of the Duke of Gordon's regiment.

† Mrs Mercer was sister of Lord Glenbervie. She died January, 1802. See Appendix [R.]

welcome news to the Major. Pray, does your Grace think that he blames me for not writing to him this great while? The true reason is, that I have not had this great while any news to send him, but what I knew would give him pain; and therefore I thought it better not to write, especially as we have been in daily expectation of seeing him here these several weeks. Will your Grace take the trouble to tell him this? There is no man to whom I have been so much obliged; and, with one or two exceptions, there is no man or woman whom I love so well."

## LETTER CXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th January, 1779.

"You are right in your conjecture, that a metrical version of the Psalms, formed upon that plan of severe simplicity which I recommend, would be a very difficult work. There is a great deal of cant in the style of poetry, especially of modern poetry: A set of epithets, and figures, and phrases, which a certain set of versifiers bring

in upon all occasions, in order to make out their verses, and prepare their rhymes. If a poet has got a good stock of these, and a knack of applying them, and is not very solicitous about energy, consistency, or truth of sentiment, he may write verses with great ease and rapidity; but such verses are not read above once or twice, and are seldom or never remembered. Their tawdry and unnecessary ornaments make them as unwieldy to the memory, as a herald's coat is to the body. Besides, where language is much ornamented, there is always a deficiency in clearness, as well as in force; and, though it may please at its first appearance, it rarely continues long in fashion. The favourite authors in every language are the simplest. They have nothing but what is *necessary* or *useful;* and such things are always in request. My reasons, therefore, for recommending a very simple metrical version of the Psalms, are chiefly these: 1st, Such a version will approach more nearly than an ornamental one to the style of the original; which, I think, will be allowed to be an advantage. 2d, It will be better understood by the common people; for, when poetical language is set off with many ornaments, it must be in a great measure unintelligible to unlearned

readers. 3d, It will continue intelligible and in fashion for a much longer time; for such is the natural and necessary effect of elegant plainness. 4th, It will take a faster hold of the memory. One of my reasons for tolerating a metrical version of the Psalms is, that it makes them more easily remembered: And Horace, when speaking on a subject not unlike this, has very well observed,

*" Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat :"*

Superfluities of style perish from the memory like water poured into a vessel that is already full. 5th, The simplicity I contend for requires a concise expression, and consequently conveys much meaning in few words; and this is particularly necessary in words intended to be sung with understanding. For singing is of necessity (or at least ought to be) slower than speaking; and, therefore, if the matter is not very close, it will happen sometimes that the singer shall be sounding notes to which his mind annexes no definite idea. One of my objections to Merrick's Psalms would be, if they are all like the specimen you favoured me with, their unnecessary and paraphrastical diffuseness. His first psalm consists of

thirty-four lines; and yet I am certain, that the whole meaning of that psalm might, with equal harmony, with equal elegance, and with superior clearness, be expressed in twenty-four. Tate and Brady's second psalm consists of forty-eight lines, and my version of that psalm of thirty-six: If the two versions be in all other respects *only equal*, I believe that which has fewest words would be thought the better. The last reason I shall assign is, that the modish tricks and ornaments of verse appear to me not very graceful in serious poetry of any sort; but in sacred poetry I consider them as worse than ungraceful, as even *indecent*. A high-priest of the Jews, officiating at the altar in ruffles and a laced waistcoat, or a clergyman in the pulpit, with the airs and dress of a player, are incongruities of the same kind with these, which, in a poetical version of the Psalms, ought to be avoided. Is it right, think you, for a Christian on Sunday, in the church, to sing,

> " His rains from heaven parched hills recruit,
> " That soon transmit the liquid store;
> " Till earth is burthened with her fruit,
> " And Nature's lap can hold no more?"

The harshness of the first line, and the half non-

sense of the first couplet, might be excused; but what shall we say to the Pagan allusion in the last line?

"After what you know of my mind on this subject, I am sure I need not say, that it is far from my purpose to recommend a rude or clownish simplicity, whereof I confess that there are innumerable instances in the version that is in most common use in Scotland; and yet, in the present case, rusticity is better than finicalness. I would rather see in the pulpit a sun-burnt face, than a painted one; and a coat out at elbows, than one overlaid with embroidery. The middle way, you will say, is best; and I allow it: And, between ourselves, I think it peculiarly honourable to the church of England, that, while she keeps at a distance from the pageantries of the Romish church, she also avoids that ritual, which might do very well with pure spirits, but which is too apt to produce listlessness and coldness in creatures weighed down with flesh and blood. I would have every thing neat and plain, and as elegant as is consistent with plainness, in the public services and in the language of religion: or, if now and then I were to introduce a little pomp, which I believe I should often be inclined

to do, I would still make it simple and plain; which, if I mistake not, would heighten its magnificence, and give permanency to its effects. Elegant and pure simplicity is the characteristic of the true pulpit-style, as it is now established by the best models, both ancient and modern; the same thing holds true of the prayers of the church of England; only these have (what they ought to have) something of a more elaborate and more dignified composition, than becomes the sermon.

" I know not whether there be any thing new in my papers on the ' Origin of Evil,' and the ' Evidences of Christianity.' It will be a considerable time before I get forward to those subjects. At present I confine myself to such as are most amusing, and, withal, least connected with those topics which formerly engrossed me to a degree that ruined my health. How much my mind has been injured by certain speculations, you will partly guess, when I tell you a fact, that is now unknown to all the world,—that, since the ' Essay on Truth' was printed in quarto, in the summer of 1776, I have never *dared* to read it over. I durst not even read the sheets, to see whether there were any errors in the print, and

was obliged to get a friend to do that office for me. Not that I am in the least dissatisfied with the sentiments: Every word of my own doctrine I do seriously believe; nor have I ever seen any objections to it which I could not easily answer. But the habit of anticipating and obviating arguments, upon an abstruse and interesting subject, came in time to have dreadful effects upon my nervous system; and I cannot read what I then wrote without some degree of horror, because it recals to my mind the horrors that I have sometimes felt, after passing a long evening in those severe studies. You will perhaps understand me better, when I have told you a short story. One who was on board the Centurion, in Lord Anson's voyage, having got some money in that expedition, purchased a small estate, about three miles from this town. I have had several conversations with him on the subject of the voyage, and once asked him, whether he had ever read the history of it? He told me, he had read all the history, except the description of their sufferings during the run from *Cape Horn* to *Juan Fernandez*, which he said were so great, that he durst not recollect or think of them."

## LETTER CXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1779.

"I lately met with what I consider as a great curiosity in the musical way. Take the history as follows: Mary, the consort of King William, was a great admirer of a certain Scots tune, which in England they call *Cold and Raw*, but which in Scotland is better known by the name of *Up in the Morning early*. One day at her private concert, where Purcel presided, the Queen interrupted the music, by desiring one Mrs Hunt, who was present, to sing the ballad of *Cold and Raw*. The lady sung it; and it is said, that Purcel was a little piqued at being obliged to sit idle at his harpsichord, and having his own compositions interrupted for the sake of such a trifle. The Queen's birth-day was soon after, when Purcel, who composed the court music for that solemnity, in order either to please the Queen, or to surprise her, or merely to indulge his own humour, made *Cold and Raw* the bass of one of the

songs. This anecdote I met with some months ago; and my author added, that this individual song was printed in Purcel's *Orpheus Britannicus*. I had a great desire to see this song, that I might know how such a genius would acquit himself when confined in such trammels. I confess, for all my high opinion of Purcel, I did not expect that a song composed on such a plan could be a good one; but I am agreeably disappointed. The song, or hymn, (for it is in the church style,) is, in my opinion, excellent. I enclose a copy of it, that you may judge for yourself. It will not perhaps strike you at first; but, when you have gone over it five or six times, you will like it much. There is something of a very original cast in the composition."

## LETTER CXXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 1st February, 1779.

"I sincerely sympathise with you on the death of Mr Garrick.* I know not how his friends in London will be able to bear the loss of him, for he was the most delightful companion in the world. On the stage nobody could admire him more than I did; and yet I am not sure whether I did not admire him still more in private company. What a splendid career he has run! idolised as he has been by the public, as well as by his friends, for almost half a century; happy in his fortune, and in his family;† superior to envy, invulnerable by detraction; and yet nobody, who knew him, will say, that his good fortune was greater than his merit.

"I have just received the *Notes* on Potter's

* For some farther account of this great actor, see the Appendix, [CC.]

† Mr Garrick was married, but never had any children.

'Æschylus,' by which I am happy to find, that my opinion of that translation is ratified by your's. I did not think it possible to do justice to the old Grecian in any modern tongue; but Mr Potter has satisfied me, that I was mistaken. It seems to me, that this is indisputably the best translation that ever appeared in English of any Greek poet. I beg, Madam, you will exert all your influence with the author, to make him go on with 'Euripides."

## LETTER CXXVIII.

### MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Hill Street, 10th February, 1779.

"I admire your perseverance in your college duties and literary labours, in the midst of so many discouragements as want of health and domestic anxiety bring with them. I rejoice in that perseverance, which will give to the world and me the means of so much instruction and pleasure. You do well in collecting and fitting for publication what you have already written. My learned and excellent friend Mr Stillingfleet, by

daily enlarging his lucubrations, and not putting the finishing hand to any, condemned to the flames, at his death, (which did not happen till he was near seventy,) many valuable manuscripts.

"You would read, with melancholy pleasure, the honours done to Mr Garrick's remains, and the tender regret expressed for his loss. He seemed to quit the theatre of the world as he did that at Drury-Lane, before any of the energy, any of the graces, with which he was wont to enspirit or adorn the part he was to act, were enfeebled or faded. In full possession of our admiration, in perfect dominion of our affections, and command of our sympathies, he quitted us: No wonder we wept at the catastrophe! As he grew disengaged from the theatrical character, he grew more absolute and excellent in the charms of the private. He gave the highest spirit to conversation; the highest joy and mirth at the convivial board. The literary men considered him as one, who, by a kind of intuition, possessed all they valued in themselves, and had a closer intellectual correspondence with them than any other man. So universal an actor must be considered rather as a general connoisseur of the human mind in all si-

tuations, than as one by profession a mimic of it.

"Mr Garrick, in his own character, was highly respectable. His friends have a great loss, the distressed and poor have a great loss, his wife the greatest: I think I never saw such perfect affection and harmony as subsisted between them. No words can paint her woe; and it would be difficult to do justice to the piety, resignation, and dignity of her behaviour on this sad occasion.

"I was much pleased with your pamphlet on 'Psalmody,' and I cannot think it possible it should give offence. I think psalms, written with great and noble simplicity, and sung in the same manner, friendly to devotion; and it is almost an offence to call in the aid of insensible and inanimate things to praise the Giver of life and reason. A psalm, decently sung by the congregation, always excites my devotion more than the organ. I would employ musical instruments in a Pagan temple, but only the voice of man in a Christian church.

"I am very glad you are so pleased with Mr Potter's 'Æschylus.' I shall communicate to him what you have said; and praise like yours will

excite him to proceed with his translation of 'Euripides.' Poor man, he has lately met with great domestic afflictions! it seems to me, that he is a man of great genius and learning.

"My letters from Paris tell me, that, since the death of Voltaire, freethinking seems less fashionable. At Paris, every thing is governed by fashion; I wish it may be *a-la-mode* to endeavour to go to heaven."

## LETTER CXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 22d February, 1779.

"My friends in England are all in tears for poor Garrick. In his own sphere he was certainly the greatest man of his time; and since I knew him, I have always thought, that in private company his talents were not less admirable than upon the stage. There was a playfulness in his humour, and a solidity in his judgment, which made him at once a most delighful and most instructive associate. After passing part of two days with him at his house at Hampton, I once intend-

ed to have addressed to him a copy of verses, in which I had actually made some progress; but something interposed to prevent me. The thought, as I remember, was to this purpose: That in him the soul of Shakespeare had revived, after undergoing, in the other world, a purification of one hundred years; for that was the exact space of time between the death of Shakespeare and the birth of Garrick. Kindred spirits they certainly were. Shakespeare was never thoroughly understood till Garrick explained him. Both were equally great in tragedy and in comedy; and yet for comedy both had evidently a predilection."

## LETTER CXXX.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 10th April, 1779.

"I have at last made good my promise, in regard to the Scotticisms; and send you inclosed a little book, containing about two hundred, with a praxis at the end, which will perhaps amuse you. I printed it for no other purpose but to give away to the young men who attend my

lectures. This collection I have been making, from time to time, for some years past. I consulted Mr Hume's list, and took a few from it. Mr Elphinston's book I also looked into, (that book, I mean, which he wrote either for or against Lord Kaimes,) and it supplied me with three or four: But Elphinston is mistaken in many things, and his own style is not free from Scotticism; which, however, is one of his least faults; for so affected and enigmatical is his phraseology, that he cannot be said to have a style at all. Dr Campbell gave me about a dozen. The rest are the result of my own observation. I shall in time, I believe, collect as many more as will be a supplement to this pamphlet; for they are endless. Even since these came from the press, I have recollected a few others, which you will find in the postscript. I am not positive that every one of my remarks are right; but I intend to send them to a learned friend in England, who will correct what is amiss. If any material amendment is made, I shall inform you of it.

"Your opinion of Bishop Lowth's 'Isaiah' coincides exactly with mine. It is equal to my highest expectations, and does honour to our age and nation. I wish the learned prelate may proceed

in his pious undertaking, and give us as many of the other books of Scripture as his other duties will leave him at leisure to revise. I made two or three trifling remarks on the language of his translation, in which there are some peculiarities that I cannot account for. To *hist*, (meaning to call with a whistle) is a word which I never before met with either in print or in conversation, and which indeed I should not have understood, if the author had not explained it in his notes; I suspect it may be provincial. *Ilex*, too, and *cyon*, are a sort of technical words, the one belonging to botany, the other to gardening; and, as such, ought not, I think, to have a place in a popular translation of Scripture. It is a striking beauty in our English Bible, that, though the language is always elegant and nervous, and for the most part very harmonious, the words are all plain and common; no affectation of learned terms, or of words of Greek or Latin etymology. I have sometimes amused myself with the simplicity and harmony of particular passages. Nothing can be more melodious than the following, which yet seems to be the effect of accident rather than of art: "Man that is born of a woman "is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh

" forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth " also as a shadow, and continueth not." Virgil himself would not versify the following passage, for fear of hurting its harmony; and yet every word is common, and there is not the least appearance of art in the composition: "My beloved " spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my " fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter " is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers " appear on the earth, the time of the singing of " birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is " heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth " her green figs, and the vines with the tender " grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my " fair one, and come away." Our critics have often affirmed, that the English tongue derives a great deal of its harshness from the multitude of its monosyllables: this passage may serve for a proof of the contrary; for here (if I reckon right) are eighty words, whereof sixty-eight are monosyllables; and yet I will venture to say, that the Italian language itself is not susceptible of greater sweetness. Some of our words of one syllable are certainly harsh, as *which, such, scratch,* &c.; but even these lose a great part of their disagree-

able sound, when the words that come before and after them are properly modulated.

"You would hear, no doubt, of the death of Mr Riddoch, one of the ministers of our English chapel. As I think I have heard you say, that you liked those few sermons which he published some years ago,* I shall take the liberty to inform you, that his widow, whom he has left in very poor circumstances, intends to publish two volumes of his sermons by subscription, and has asked that Dr Campbell and I would revise the manuscripts; which, considering her distress, and his merit, both as a man and as a preacher, we did not decline."

* Six occasional Sermons on important subjects, by James Riddoch, A. M. one of the ministers of St Paul's chapel, Aberdeen, published in 1762. The two first, preached on New-year's day, are peculiarly excellent. Those alluded to here, which Dr Beattie and Dr Campbell had the goodness to revise previous to their publication, were printed in the year 1782. They are plain, pious, practical, and useful discourses, which may be perused with advantage. As his manner in the pulpit was extremely energetic, they were listened to by his congregation with much delight.

## LETTER CXXXI.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 27th May, 1779.

"I rejoice in the good weather, in the belief that it extends to Glenfiddich;* where I pray that your Grace may enjoy all the health and happiness that good air, goats' whey, romantic solitude, and the society of the loveliest children in the world, can bestow. May your days be clear sunshine, and may a gentle rain give balm to your nights, that the flowers and birch-trees may salute you in the morning with all their fragrance! May the kids frisk and play tricks before you, with unusual sprightliness; and may the song of birds, the hum of bees, and the distant waterfall, with now and then the shepherd's horn resounding from the mountains, entertain you with a full chorus of Highland music!

* A hunting-seat of the Duke of Gordon's, in the heart of the Grampian mountains; a wild, but beautiful, sequestered spot, of which Dr Beattie was peculiarly fond.

"My imagination had parcelled out the lovely glen into a thousand little paradises; in the hope of being there, and seeing every day, in that solitude, what is

> "Fairer than famed of old, or fabled since,
> "Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide
> "By errant knights."

But the information you received at Cluny gave a check to my fancy, and was indeed a great disappointment to Mrs Beattie and me; not on account of the goats' whey, but because it keeps us so long at such a distance from your Grace."

## LETTER CXXXII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 12th June, 1779.

"You are extremely welcome to as many copies of the Scotticisms as you please; I shall send a parcel by the first opportunity. But I would not wish the pamphlet to be exposed to the censure of critics, who know not the peculiar circumstances of the persons for whose use it

was intended. I printed it for the improvement of those young men only who attend my lectures; who are generally of the north country, and many of whom have had no opportunity of learning English from the company they kept. To have confined myself, therefore, to such idioms as may actually be found in printed books, or to such as are current to the south as well as the north of Scotland, would not have answered my purpose. There are in the list, as you justly observe, some phrases, which are not often heard among the better sort of our people; but, in this country, they are, in fact, used by many above the rank of the vulgar, and are sometimes mistaken for English, because they may be seen in English books, though in a different sense: such is, *misguide* for *sully*, ill to *guide* for ill to *manage*, &c. *Wrongous* and *iniquous* are very common among Scottish lawyers. In a word, I might, no doubt, have omitted several of those that are inserted; and would probably have done so, if I had not known by experience, that phrase-books, vocabularies, and dictionaries, are oftener faulty from defect than from redundancy.

"Negatives are hard to prove, especially in language. A good phrase is established by a quo-

tation from a good author: but to say of a phrase, that it is a Scottish idiom, is to say, that, though used in Scotland, it occurs not in any English writer of classical authority; a point which, in many cases, it will be no easy matter to evince. There may be errors, therefore, in my pamphlet; it would be strange indeed if there were none; but it may have its use for all that. Old Dr * * * * * * * used to tell me, that he formerly belonged to a club in Edinburgh where nothing but Latin was spoken; and that when appeals were made to Mr Ruddiman,† (who was a sort of oracle among them,) he would give his opinion very readily and decisively, when he thought the Latin good; but was slow to pronounce concerning any phrases which had the appearance of Latin, that they were bad. And I remember, that Walker, in his excellent 'Treatise on English Particles,' makes a remark to the same purpose, and gives a list of Latin phrases from the best authors, which one, who was not well read in the classics, would, without hesitation, pronounce to be Anglicisms."

† The celebrated grammarian.

## LETTER CXXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 17th June, 1779.

"I have been reading Johnson's prefaces to the English edition of the poets, which poor Dilly sent me in exchange for the Edinburgh edition. There are many excellent things in the prefaces, particularly in the lives of Milton, Dryden, and Waller. He is more civil to Milton than I expected, though he hates him for his blank verse and his politics. To the forced and unnatural conceits of Cowley, I think he is too favourable; and I heartily wish, that, instead of the poems of this poet, which are printed at full length, and fill two large volumes, he had given us 'The Fairy Queen' of Spenser, which is left out, very absurdly, I think. He has brought his lives no further down than to Hughes; but I hear he intends to give the remainder as soon as he can."

## LETTER CXXXIV.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 22d June, 1779.

"I congratulate your Grace, with all my heart, on the safe arrival of one of the best and most beautiful boys that ever was born.* It gave me the most sincere pleasure to see him so well, so mindful of all his old friends, and so impatient to get forward to the Glen.†

"And here your Grace will pardon me for expressing a wish, that the Marquis were attended by a man of learning, in quality of tutor, as well as by Mr S*******, who is, to be sure, in every respect but one, the best man in the world for his purpose. Many an English clergyman would, with transport, resign his cure, in order to undertake so pleasing an employment: And I think the tutor ought by all means to be an Englishman, regularly educated; and to be recommend-

* The Marquis of Huntley.

† Glenfiddich. See p. 201.

ed either by the Archbishop of York, or by Dr Barnard, provost of Eton, whom I look upon as the best judges now in the world of the qualifications requisite in a teacher. I beg your Grace will think of this.

" I will not attempt to describe what I suffered from the cruel necessity which compelled me to decline your Grace's invitation. My regret was such, and the cause of that regret is so great a weight on my spirits, that I believe even Adam Smith himself, * if he were to know it, would almost pity me. Mrs Beattie has been a little better for this week past; and bids me say, that though she is obliged to give up all thoughts of the Glen for this season, she still hopes to be happy in Gordon-Castle before the end of autumn. She now goes out once a day in a chaise; but if the airing exceed two miles, she is fatigued with it. I would fain hope, that, when she is a little accustomed to this exercise, she may be able to undertake a little journey, which I am sure would be of infinite service to her.

" I have made several visits of late to the Den

* In allusion to Dr Smith's doctrine of *Sympathy*.

of Rubislaw,* and find a charm in it which I was never sensible of before. One evening it appeared in dreadful majesty; for it was so thick a fog, that I could hardly see the tops of the trees, or even of the cliffs; and so I was at liberty to fancy them as high and as wild as I pleased. But the more I indulge myself in that solitude, the more I regret my distance from another,† which I hear is admirable for the beauties of still life, and of which I know how much it excels all other solitudes for every other species of beauty. I still flatter myself with the hope of assisting, one time or other, at some of your Grace's morning lectures. Pray remember your promise of sending me the history of *a day*.

"I have a little story to tell your Grace, and a favour to ask; which will give you the trouble of another letter in a post or two."

* A romantic woody spot, in the near neighbourhood of Aberdeen; to which Dr Beattie delighted to retire, in order to indulge in silent meditation.

A *Den*, in the vernacular language of Scotland, as used in the sense here meant, is synonymous with what in England is called a *Dingle*.

† Glenfiddich.

## LETTER CXXXV.

### DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 25th June, 1779.

" An extraordinary book has just now appeared in this country; but, before I say any thing of it, I must trouble you with a short narrative.

" During the last years of Mr Hume's life, his friends gave out, that he regretted his having dealt so much in metaphysics, and that he never would write any more. He was at pains to disavow his ' Treatise of Human Nature,' in an advertisement which he published about half a year before his death. All this, with what I then heard of his bad health, made my heart relent towards him; as you would no doubt perceive by the concluding part of the preface to my quarto book. But, immediately after his death, I heard, that he had left behind him two manuscripts, with strict charge, that they should be published by his executors; one, ' The History of his Life,' and the other, ' Dialogues on Natural Religion.' This last was said to be more scep-

tical than any of his other writings Yet he had employed the latter part of his life in preparing it. The copy which I have, was sent me two days ago by my friend and neighbour Dr Campbell; than whom no person better understands the tendency and the futility of Mr Hume's philosophy, and who accompanied it with a note, in the following words: "You have probably not "yet seen this posthumous performance of Da- "vid Hume. As the publisher, with whom I am "not acquainted, has favoured me with a copy, "I have sent it to you for your perusal; and "shall be glad to have your opinion of it, after "you have read it. For my part, I think it too "dry, and too metaphysical, to do much hurt; "neither do I discover any thing new or curious "in it. It serves but as a sort of commentary to "the 'Dialogues on Natural Religion and Pro- "vidence,' published in his lifetime. What most "astonishes me, is, the zeal which this publica- "tion shows for disseminating those sceptical "principles."*

* Dr Campbell's prediction, as to the fate of this posthumous work of Mr Hume's, seems to have been completely verified; for the "Dialogues concerning Natural Religion" are now never heard of.

In my answer to Dr Campbell's note, I told him, "that I was happy to find, from his account, "that the book was not likely to do much harm; "that I would acquiesce in his judgment of it, "which I was persuaded was just; but that at "present my circumstances, in regard to health "and spirits, would not permit me to enter up- "on the study of it."

"Are you not surprised, Madam, that any man should conclude his life (for Mr Hume knew he was dying) with preparing such a work for the press? Yet Mr Hume must have known, that, in the opinion of a great majority of his readers, his reasonings, in regard to God and Providence, were most pernicious, as well as most absurd. Nay, he himself seemed to think them danger- ous. This appears from the following fact, which I had from Dr Gregory. Mr Hume was boast- ing to the Doctor, that, among his disciples in Edinburgh, he had the honour to reckon many of the fair sex. "Now, tell me," said the Doctor, "whether, if you had a wife or a daughter, you "would *wish* them to be your disciples? Think "well before you answer me; for I assure you, "that, whatever your answer is, I will not con- "ceal it." Mr Hume, with a smile, and some

hesitation, made this reply: "No; I believe "scepticism may be too sturdy a virtue for a "woman." Miss Gregory* will certainly remember, that she has heard her father tell this story. How different is Doctor Gregory's 'Legacy' † to Mr Hume's!

"Do me the favour, Madam, to let me know that you are well; that your nephew is just such as I wish him to be; and that the Duchess-dowager of Portland, Mrs Delany, Mrs Carter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and our other friends, are all in good health. I never pass a day, nor (I believe) an hour of the day, without thinking of them, and wishing them all imaginable happiness. Sometimes I flatter myself with the hope of seeing you all once more before I die; it is a pleasing thought; but,

"Shadows, clouds, and darkness, rest upon it."

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* Daughter of the late Dr John Gregory,‡ who, at the date of this letter, was on a visit at Mrs Montagu's. Miss Gregory is now the wife of my respected friend, the Reverend Mr Alison.§

† Dr Gregory's elegant little posthumous work, "A Father's Legacy to his Daughters."

‡ See Vol. I. p. 41.

§ *Ibid.* p. 250.

"How shall I thank you, Madam, for all your goodness! your refusal to accept of any indemnification for the expence of my advertisements, is a new instance. I am ashamed, and know not what to say: *Dii tibi—et mens sibi conscia recti, præmia digna ferant.*"

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The following little artless tale, referred to in a former letter, is well told, and does credit to the goodness of Dr Beattie's heart; although, unfortunately, his endeavours to serve his old friend, I believe, proved unsuccessful.

## LETTER CXXXVI.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 5th July, 1779.

"I now sit down to make good the threatening denounced in the conclusion of a letter, which I had the honour to write to your Grace about ten days ago. The request I am going to make

I should preface with many apologies, if I did not know, that the personage to whom I address myself is too well acquainted with all the good emotions of the human heart, to blame the warmth of a school-boy attachment, and too generous to think the worse of me for wishing to assist an unfortunate friend.

"Three weeks ago, as I was scribbling in my garret, a man entered, whom at first I did not know; but, on his desiring me to look him in the face, I soon recollected an old friend, whom I had not seen, and scarcely heard of, these twenty years. He and I lodged in the same house, when we attended the school of Laurencekirk, in the year 1747. I was then about ten years old, and he about fifteen. As he took a great liking to me, he had many opportunities of obliging me; having much more knowledge of the world, as well as more bodily strength, than I. He was, besides, an ingenious mechanic, and made for me many little things: and it must not be forgotten, that he first put a violin in my hands, and gave me the only lessons in music I ever received. Four years after this period, I went to college, and he engaged in farming. But our acquaintance was renewed about five years after, when

I remembered he made me the confident of a passion he had for the greatest beauty in that part of the country, whom he soon after married.

"I was very glad to see my old friend so unexpectedly; and we talked over many old stories, which, though interesting to us, would have given little pleasure to any body else. But my satisfaction was soon changed to regret, when, upon inquiring into the particulars of his fortune during these twenty years, I found he had been very unsuccessful. His farming projects had miscarried; and, happening to give some offence to a young woman, who was called the housekeeper of a gentleman on whom he depended, she swore she would be revenged, to his ruin; and was as good as her word. He satisfied his creditors, by giving them all his substance; and, retiring to a small house in Johnshaven,* made a shift to support his family by working as a joiner: a trade which, when a boy, he had picked up for his amusement. But a consumptive complaint overtook him; and though he got the better of it, he has never since been able to do any thing that

* A small fishing-town in the county of Kincardine.

requires labour, and can now only make fiddles, and some such little matters for which there is no great demand in the place where he lives. He told me, he had come to Aberdeen on purpose to put me in mind of our old acquaintance, and see whether I could do any thing for him. I asked, in what respect he wished me to serve him. He would do any thing, he said, for his family, that was not dishonourable: and, on pressing him a little further, I found, that the height of his ambition was to be a tide-waiter, a land-waiter, or an officer of excise. I told him, it was particularly unlucky that I had not the least influence, or even acquaintance, with any one commissioner, either of the excise or customs: but, as I did not care to discourage him, I promised to think of his case, and to do what I could. I have since seen a clergyman, who knows my friend very well, and describes his condition as still more forlorn than he had represented it.

"It is in behalf of this poor man, that I now venture to implore your Grace's advice and assistance. I am well aware, that, though his case is very interesting to me, there is nothing extraordinary in it; and that your Grace must often be solicited for others in like circumstances. It

is, therefore, with the utmost reluctance, that I have taken this liberty. If your Grace thinks, that an application from me to Mr baron Gordon might be sufficient to procure one of the offices in question for my friend, I would not wish you to have any trouble; but if my application were enforced by yours, it would have a better chance to succeed. This, however, I do not request, if it is not so easy to your Grace, as to be almost a matter of indifference.

"By the first convenient opportunity I hope to send your Grace a sort of curiosity,—four elegant Pastorals, by a Quaker;—not one of our Quakers of Scotland, but a true English Quaker, who says *thee* and *thou*, and comes into a room, and sits down in company, without taking off his hat. For all this, he is a very worthy man, an elegant scholar, a cheerful companion, and a particular friend of mine. His name is John Scott, of Amwell, near Ware, Hertfordshire, where he lives in an elegant retirement, (for his fortune is very good;) and has dug, in a chalk-hill near his house, one of the most curious grottos I have ever seen. As it is only twenty miles from London, I would recommend it to your Grace, when you are there, as worth going to visit. Your

Grace will be pleased with his Pastorals, not only on account of their morality and sweet versification, but also for their images and descriptions, which are a very exact picture of the groves, woods, waters, and windmills, of that part of England where he resides."

## LETTER CXXXVII.

### MRS MONTAGU TO DR BEATTIE.

Sandleford, 20th July, 1779.

"I always consider your letters as a favour; and when they brought a good account of your and Mrs Beattie's health, they gave me the highest pleasure. I can only say, that with your last I felt the most sincere and tender sympathy, and daily pour forth the warmest wishes for her speedy recovery.

"I will now give you some account of myself: I went to Bath the middle of April, and, with great benefit to my health, drank the waters above six weeks. A winter season in London, and a spring season at Bath, bring on a weariness of the bustle of society; and I was glad to pass

the month of June in the sober, cheerful tranquillity of Sandleford. But in this working-day-world one can have but few holidays: the house I am building, and an estate I am purchasing, created many occasions for my going to London; to the busy world, therefore, business brought me back, and from thence I am but just returned to peace and sunshine, and the rural joys of July. The animated scene of hay-making is very delightful to me; and I passed my mornings in the grove, to contemplate the gay labour of the hay-makers, who, to the number of forty, of different ages and sexes, were all busy in the field below me. The men were gay, the women chattering, and the boys and girls sporting and playing amidst their work; so that labour seemed rather a brisk exertion than a painful task. The reaper's employment is more serious and more laborious, as if, the nearer the approach to wealth, the less gay the condition; their wages are greater than those of the hay-makers, but the occupation is not so delightful, nor performed with such careless ease; and is it not the same in the business of civil life? At this juncture, particularly, I think the highest

offices in our state must be the most laborious, and full of seriousness and care. Public danger used to beget public union; but I am sorry to say, that our leaders of faction have not seemed to forget their private objects for the general interest. This summer will probably bring very important events to England. Daily rumours of invasion, in some part or other of our country, seem very alarming to ears, unaccustomed to such reports; but if the chastisements of Heaven will restore those virtues, which prosperity seems to have impaired, such corrections must be reckoned amongst the favours of Providence. Resignation to Divine Wisdom and Omnipotence becomes creatures, not only weak, but blind; so I endeavour to keep my mind in tranquillity.

"I am very glad you were pleased with Mr Potter's 'Æschylus.' I think he has made a great addition to the English literature. At my request he has since added some notes, which I will send you if you have not got them. He is very cautious in explaining ancient mythology: I wished he had given his conjectures on the allegory of Prometheus. Mr Potter is now tran-

slating 'Euripides;' and, if he succeed as well as in the other translation, the world will owe him a great deal; and I heartily wish, that, in some shape, it would pay him part of the debt; he is a man of great merit, small preferment, and large family. I hear of few new works to come forth; in the din of arms, not only the laws, but the muses are silent.

"I cannot conclude my letter, without exhorting you to collect together those things you have written for the young people who attend your lectures. I am convinced they would be useful to the world, and much approved by it, if you would publish them. In all your essays there is much to be learnt; observations and deductions perfectly new, and at the same time just. With such conditions, I account essays to be pleasant and profitable; but most essay-writers give mere common-place observations, and a great deal of trite matter."

## LETTER CXXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO MAJOR MERCER.

Aberdeen, 1st October, 1779.

"I betook myself to the reading of Cæsar when I was at Peterhead, for I happened to have no other book. I had forgot a great deal of him; and scarce remembered any thing more than the opinion which I formed of his style, about twenty-five years ago. But when I began, I found it almost impossible to leave off. There is nothing in the historical style more perfect; and his transactions are a complete contrast to the military affairs of these times. I know not which of his talents I should most admire: his indefatigable activity and perseverance; his intrepidity and presence of mind, which never fail him even for a moment; his address as a politician; his ability as a commander, in which he seems to me to have no equal; or the beauty, brevity, clearness, and modesty, of his narrative. I understand all his battles as well as if I had seen them: and, in half a sentence, he explains to me the grounds

and occasions of a war, more fully than a modern historian could do in fifty pages of narrative, and as many more of dissertation. In a word, as the world at that time stood in need of an absolute sovereign, I am clearly of opinion, that he should have been the person. Pompey was a vain coxcomb, who, because a wrong-headed faction had given him the title of *Magnus*, foolishly thought himself the greatest of men; Cassius was a malecontent, and a mere demagogue; and Brutus was the dupe of a surly philosophy, operating upon an easy temper. I ask pardon for troubling you with this, which you understand so much better than I do: but I am quite full of Cæsar at present; and you know, 'what is nearest the heart 'is nearest the mouth."

## LETTER CXXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Aberdeen, 17th December, 1779.

"About three months ago, a lady, who is a great admirer of Bishop Butler, put into my hands a manuscript-charge of that excellent prelate to

the clergy of the diocese of Durham. If it is not in his printed works, I doubt whether it was ever published; but no person, who is acquainted with Butler's manner, could read half a page without being satisfied that it is genuine. I was so well pleased with it, that I had thoughts of printing it in a small pamphlet; but domestic troubles have so disconcerted me, that I am hardly capable of any thing. If your Lordship is curious to see it, I believe I could easily procure a MS. copy. Let me again make it my request, that you would collect all your printed pieces, and give them to the world in one publication.

"I think I told your Lordship in my last, that, in order to keep my mind from preying upon itself, and to give it a sufficiency of such employment as would amuse the fancy, without affecting the heart, I had resolved to finish a grammatical treatise, which I began some considerable time ago. It is now finished, and makes one of my largest treatises. It consists of two parts; the first, 'On the Origin and general Nature of Speech;' the second, 'On Universal Grammar.' I have drawn a good deal of information from Mr Harris's 'Hermes,' and Lord Monboddo on 'Language;' but my plan and my sentiments

differ in many particulars from both. Monboddo's partiality to the Epicurean hypothesis of the origin of language and society,

"*Cum prorepserunt primis animalia terris,*" &c.

I thought it incumbent upon me to animadvert upon; and I hope I have shown that it is ill founded.

"I have never seen Lord Monboddo's 'Ancient Metaphysics.' He and I have long been particularly acquainted. Formerly we used to disagree a little on the subject of religion; but I hear he has become more cautious on that head. He carries his admiration of Aristotle, and the abstruser parts of the Greek philosophy, to a degree of extravagance that is hardly credible. Herodotus is his favourite historian; and so far is he from thinking, with the rest of the world, that he is credulous, that he seems to think him infallible in all matters, which he says he had an opportunity of inquiring into. He believes in the existence of satyrs, and men with the heads of dogs, and other Egyptian monsters: and he and I have had many a controversy concerning men with tails, whom he firmly believes to exist, not only in the islands of Nicobar in the Gulf of

Bengal, but even in this country. He holds, that men are naturally cannibals; from which he infers, that man is not by nature a social animal. The Lacedemonian government and discipline he admires beyond that of all other nations. Whether he justifies their conduct towards the Helots, I do not remember; but I have heard him seriously maintain, that slavery is the state that is most proper for peasants, and that they and the cattle ought to be annexed to the soil, and bought and sold along with it. He considers Horace as a philosopher, and Virgil as a good poet: but his opinion of Latin literature is but low at best; for I have heard him say, that, if we except the Roman law, there is hardly any thing in the Latin tongue that merits preservation.

"Notwithstanding these strange peculiarities of opinion, some of which are the objects of laughter rather than censure, Lord Monboddo is an honest, worthy, and friendly man, indulgent to his servants, and kind to his tenants; an elegant speaker, agreeable and jocose in conversation, and perfectly well bred. Mr Harris's 'Hermes' first set him upon studying the Greek; and it unluckily directed him to the most insignificant part of ancient learning, 'The Analytics

and Metaphysics' of Aristotle; which he has studied so long, that I believe he is now seriously of opinion, that nothing else deserves to be studied."

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There is something extremely affecting in the tender solicitude which, in the following letter, Dr Beattie expresses concerning the education and future fortunes of his sons, at a time when he apprehended that he had not long to live. Little did he then suspect that he would have the misfortune to survive them both.

## LETTER CXL.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 18th January, 1780.

"In my present condition, it is natural for me to think what is likely to befal my family when I leave it. The affairs I have to settle are not

extensive or complex: I have taken the liberty to give you some concern in them.

"About a month ago, I executed a deed, with all the necessary formalities; in which I named you, my dear Sir, with some other friends, tutors and curators for my two boys. I ought, no doubt, to have informed you of this sooner; but I know you will excuse me. This deed I consider as the most, and indeed as the only, material part of my settlements. It is scarce necessary for one to make a will, who wishes his children to be on an equal footing, in regard to inheritance; and whose property consists chiefly in a little money and some moveables. I hope I shall leave them what may keep them from being a burden on any body, and what, with strict economy, may afford them the means of an education somewhat better than I received myself. Friends may be necessary to help them forward a little in the world; and I trust in Providence, that those will not be wanting. Will you indulge me in the freedom of saying a word or two more on this subject.

"My first wish, in regard to my two boys, is, that they may be good Christians, and, in one way or another, useful in society. Of the younger

I can say nothing, as I know not his character. The elder is much addicted to learning, of a good temper, and excellent capacity; but his constitution is delicate, and I do not think him made for the bustle of life. I have, therefore, had thoughts of getting him appointed, when he comes to be of age, my assistant and successor; provided he himself should then have no objection to that way of life: and, from my experience in teaching, the care I meant to take of his education, and the farrago of papers which I have got together on moral subjects, I flattered myself, that I might make him enter upon that employment in a way creditable to himself, and not unprofitable to society: But this plan could not be brought to bear these eight or nine years; and I cannot hope for so long a life. Besides, I have observed, that plans laid so early for children are seldom or never made effectual. The church is a scene of business still more tranquil than mine; and that, I presume, would not be disagreeable to him. But this is mere conjecture.

"Be assured, that it would do me great good, if I could flatter myself with the hope of visiting Edinburgh in the spring, and giving you the charge of my person and papers; not to mention

the pleasure I should take in seeing my friends (of which I need not give them any assurances). I am sensible, that I have already lived too long in solitude; too long, I mean, for one who loves society and cheerfulness, as I do, and always have done. No hermit lives more constant to his cave than I have done to my house for these eighteen months. The smallness of my house, and the delicacy of Mrs B.'s nerves, which cannot bear the least noise, will not allow me to have any company with me; and the consequence is, that there are only two houses in the town to which I am ever invited. In fact, I have not dined abroad more than twice these three months. Now that I am able to go to the college again, my business there gives me some amusement through the day; but all the long evening I sit alone, trying sometimes to read, and sometimes to write, except now and then when I give my son a lesson in Virgil. This must in the end have very bad effects upon my health and spirits; and, therefore, it is no wonder that I long to be from home, and to sojourn for some little time in a land of friendship, tranquillity, and cheerfulness. My first excursion (if I ever make any) must be to Gordon-castle.

"The 'Grammatical Treatise,' which I told you of, is finished. It is one of the longest, and not one of the worst, of my dissertations. I have also written, since you were here, 'Remarks on Sublimity, being a sort of counterpart to those on 'Laughter:' but I am not quite pleased with this, nor has it received my last hand. I believe I shall next set about finishing what I formerly threw together on 'Romance-writing and Chivalry;' not because it is important, but because it is amusing, and will require no deep study. It is pretty long too; and, in my dull jog-trot way, will be an object to me for at least two months. In a word, my posthumous works (for posthumous I believe I may call them) will soon be as voluminous as those I have printed. I must be transcribing one or other of my old scrawls; and when one transcribes, one enlarges and corrects insensibly. For I cannot think; I am too much agitated and *distrait* (as Lord Chesterfield would say) to read any thing that is not very desultory; I cannot play at cards,—I could never learn to smoke,—and my musical days are over.

"It gives me great pain to hear of the fate of poor Cook. I lately read his voyage for the se-

cond time; and considered him not only as an excellent writer, an able philosopher, and the most consummate navigator that ever lived, but also as a person of the greatest magnanimity, modesty, and humanity. He was indeed one of my greatest favourites; and I look upon his death as an irreparable loss to his country and to mankind."

## LETTER CXLI.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1780.

"With this you will receive a packet containing two 'Mirrors,'* which are just come to hand, and which I send separate from the rest, (whereof I have now a considerable parcel,) because your Grace will probably guess the author. I had no ambition to view myself in any of these folio

* A periodical paper with that title, published at Edinburgh at this time. For some account of which, and of the 'Lounger,' see the Appendix, [DD.]

looking-glasses; but, as the publisher had sent me a set from the beginning, and told me that he would have no returns but in kind, and, as I had never refused the terms, I thought myself bound in a sort of debt of honour, which I endeavoured to pay with some detached thoughts 'On Dreaming.' It is a subject which I ought to understand as well as other people; for I believe I have dreamed as much, both sleeping and waking, as most men of my age. Your Grace will observe, that the subject is not concluded, as I have not yet got time to transcribe the last part. The foolish gasconade at the top of the first, is an addition by the printer. I shall be happy if you find any thing tolerable in these two papers, to indemnify you for the dulness of this, which indeed I write under very unfavourable circumstances,—rheumatism, east-wind, shivering, a confused head, an aching heart, &c."

## LETTER CXLII.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 19th March, 1780.

"As I sincerely sympathised with your Grace on the occasion of your late uneasiness, it is with the greatest pleasure I now send my congratulations on the good news from Rodney; by which you will see, that your brother's laurels, instead of being, as you apprehended, stained with blood, are decorated with gold. For the sake of your Grace, as well as of his country, I pray, that the same success may attend him wherever he goes; and that your tenderness and anxiety may soon receive their full reward in his safe return. When I consider the life that those lead who are engaged in the service of their country, the busy and merry faces with which they are continually surrounded, and those tumultuous hopes, and that bustle of employment, which keep their minds and bodies in constant exercise, I cannot but think their state much more enviable, than that of the affectionate friend, whom they leave behind them at full lei-

sure to magnify and multiply all their real dangers, and to imagine a thousand others that will never have any reality.

"I am greatly obliged to your Grace for the little novel with the great name. At the first reading I did not thoroughly understand it; but at the second I liked it well: and I agree with your Grace, that the author shows a capacity for much better things. There is something waggish enough, as well as uncommon, in the moral. But, in the preface, there are some thoughts and expressions not quite so feminine as I could have wished. "*Read my book, or go hang your-*"*self*," is not like the language of a fair lady; any more than what she says about being drenched in Mr Walpole's champaign:—But perhaps she wished it to be thought a masculine performance. *

"I am happy that your Grace approves of my treatise 'On Dreaming.' The publisher has never expressed any desire to have the sequel, and therefore I have not sent it. I suspect he may

* I presume the novel, Dr Beattie here alludes to, is one which, though published anonymously, was understood to be written by Lady Craven, now Margravine of Anspach.

think it too serious for his paper. Your Grace seems to think, that I should avow more faith in dreams, if I thought it for the good of mankind that they should be believed. I confess there is something in this: and, as a proof, I beg leave to transcribe the concluding paragraph:

"To conclude: Providence certainly superin-
"tends the affairs of men; and often, we know
"not how often, interposes for our preservation.
"It would therefore be presumptuous to affirm,
"that supernatural cautions, in regard to futu-
"rity, are never communicated in dreams. The
"design of this discourse is, not to contradict
"any authentic experience, or historical fact, but
"only to show, that dreams may proceed from a
"variety of causes which have nothing super-
"natural; that our waking thoughts are often
"equally unaccountable; that, therefore, a su-
"perstitious attention to the former is not less
"absurd, than a like attention to the latter would
"be; and that, though we are not much ac-
"quainted with the nature of this wonderful
"mode of perception, we know enough of it to
"see, that it is not useless or superfluous; but
"may, on the contrary, answer some purposes of

"great importance to our welfare, both in soul "and body."*

"In the course of my walks, I straggled the other day into the Den of Rubislaw: But, whether it was owing to the stormy weather, or to the gloom of my own thoughts, I soon found it was not a fit place for me at that time. Instead of sighing and murmuring, the naked trees seemed to roar in the wind, and the black stream to rumble and growl through the rocks; and therefore, as I did not wish to detain even the *idea* of your Grace in so dreary a wilderness, I made haste to leave it. Two months hence it will be more pleasing, and, it is possible, I may then be more capable of being pleased."

* What Dr Beattie intended as a third number of a 'Mirror' on 'Dreaming,' was not printed when that paper was published in single numbers. But it was added as a sequel to the seventy-fourth paper, when the 'Mirror' was afterwards reprinted in volumes. They who wish to see more on this mysterious, and, may I be permitted to add, unintelligible faculty of dreaming, may consult Professor Dugald Stewart's very ingenious dissertation on the subject, in his 'Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.'†

† Chap. V. sect. v. p. 320.

## LETTER CXLIII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 11th April, 1780.

"I am glad that you approve of my criticism on the inscription for the burying-ground. It would still, as you say, be more classical, if it were shorter; but, '*in spe beatæ resurrectionis per Christum,*' ought not to be expunged. Classical writings are good; but the Christian faith is much better: and (to adopt the words of Addison, a little varied) 'I should be sorry to sacrifice my catechism to my latinity.' The epitaph on Franklin I had seen before: it is not at all amiss.

"I have, since the college broke up, been hard at work upon Mr Riddoch's manuscript sermons; but I have only got through five of them, and there are still five-and-twenty before me. Never did I engage in a more troublesome business. There is not a sentence, there is hardly a line, that does not need correction. This is owing partly to the extreme inaccuracy of the writing,

but chiefly to the peculiarity of the style; an endless string of climaxes; the involution of clauses within clauses; the unmeasurable length of the sentences; and such a profusion of superfluous words, as I have never before seen in any composition. To cure all these diseases is impossible. I must be satisfied with alleviating some of the worst symptoms; yet, to do my old friend justice, I must confess, that the sermons have, in many places, great energy, and even eloquence, and abound in shrewd remarks, and striking sentiments.* They are gloomy indeed; and will suggest to those who never saw the author, what is really true, that, in preaching, he always had a frown on his countenance. He seldom seeks to draw with the cords of love, or with the bands of a man: his motto should be, "Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." Both methods are good in their season; but the former is, if I mistake not, most consonant to the practice of our Saviour and his apostles, as well as to that of the English divines, who, I think, are the best of all modern preachers.

"This puts me in mind of a passage in my

* See p. 200.

friend the Bishop of Chester's last letter, which, I know, you will be glad to see: "I am glad to "find (says he), we are to have another volume "of sermons from Dr Blair. For although they "may be thought by some severe judges a little "too florid and rhetorical, yet they certainly "abound with good sense and useful observa- "tions, and just sentiments of religion, convey- "ed in lively and elegant language: better cal- "culated, perhaps, to engage the attention, and "touch the hearts of the generality of readers, "than that correct simplicity, and chastity of "diction, which nicer ears require. There is, "however, another volume of sermons expected, "with which every class of readers will, I con- "ceive, be abundantly satisfied; I mean one "from Bishop Hurd. When such talents, and "taste, and learning, as his, are applied to the "illustration of practical subjects, and the re- "commendation of common religious duties, we "may expect every effect from them that human "abilities are capable of producing. Such publi- "cations as these will, I hope, in some degree, "counteract the principles that will probably be "diffused over the kingdom by a very different

" sort of composition—a second volume of 'The " Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

" I am much obliged to you, my dear Sir, for your kind concern in my welfare, and for the many good advices contained in your last. I am deeply sensible of their importance, and will do what I can to follow them: But in my case there are some peculiar difficulties, which I do not well know how it will be possible for me to get over."

## LETTER CXLIV.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 23d May, 1780.

" Dr Blair's second volume I also saw at Gordon-Castle. The Duke and Duchess read it *en famille* on Sunday evening; and I glanced over a good part of it. I did not think it quite equal to the first; but perhaps I may be mistaken. Dr Gerard's 'Sermons,' in one volume 8vo, are just now sent me; but I have not had time to read a single page. I am sure they will be sensible and instructive. The author was my master, and I have the greatest regard for him. He was more

than my master,—he was my particular friend, at a time when I had very few friends.

"The death of Sir Adolphus Oughton must be a great affliction to all his friends: I feel for them, and for myself. In him, the world has ost one of the best men it had to boast of. He has lost nothing, but gained every thing; and therefore there is something selfish in our lamentations."*

## LETTER CXLV.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 23d May, 1780.

"To say that my departure from Gordon-Castle cost me some sighs and tears, is not saying much; as I am apt, of late, when alone, to be rather expensive in that way. I left you with a weight upon my mind, which would have been hardly supportable, if it had not been alleviated, in some degree, by the hope of soon meeting the Duke Glasgow, and of seeing your Grace once more

* See Vol. I. p. 305.

before the end of summer. By the bye, I hope Mr Nicols will not intermeddle in the arrangement of the dressing-room library; I flatter myself, that honour will be reserved for me.

"I have sent a small print, which my bookseller, in the abundance of his wisdom, and contrary to my advice, is determined to prefix to a new edition of my 'Essays on Poetry, Music,' &c. The figure, designed by Angelica, is certainly very noble,—much more so than I expected; and is intended to represent Socrates in prison, and under sentence of death, composing a hymn in honour of Apollo. But I am afraid, that the readers will neither guess at the meaning, nor see any connection between it and the book: in which case, they will no doubt suppose, that the author has prefixed his own image. However, the outline is good and graceful, and the attitude expressive. If it were not rather too melancholy, I would say, that it is very like Socrates. Your Grace knows, that the old philosopher was one of the merriest men of his time.

"I should write a treatise, instead of a letter, if I were to be particular in my acknowledgments

of gratitude, for what I have experienced of your Grace's and the Duke's goodness. I shall only say, (for I know you would not read me to an end, if I were, on this subject, to use many words) that I am perfectly sensible of your kind attention to the peculiarities of my case. I saw, by many instances every day, how solicitous you were to withdraw my view from every thing that could create or revive painful thoughts. My gratitude and admiration (which are two very pleasing and *healthy* emotions) were not wholly inadequate; and the consequences are visible to every body. Since my return, I have been complimented on my improved looks; though I have felt but little of that pleasure which the sight of home used formerly to produce in me. In fact, home is not good for me at present, and I shall leave it as soon as ever I can."

## LETTER CXLVI.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 25th May, 1780.

"We often spoke of you at Gordon-Castle, and with very great regard. The Duke is still more and more astronomical. He had Mr Copland* with him for a fortnight while I was there: and they two were, from morning to night, hard at work in calculation and observation. The Duke and Duchess are both, I think, in better health than ever I knew them to be.

"The manuscript-sermon of Bishop Butler I sent to the Bishop of Chester. You will like to see what he says of it. "It abounds with that "strong sense and sound reasoning which so "eminently distinguished him; and I cannot see "in it the smallest foundation for that accusa- "tion which it brought upon him, of being fa- "vourable to Popery." This, it seems, was the case at the time the sermon was preached; and

* Professor of Mathematics in Marischal College.

it was perhaps for this reason that he never published it in his works.

"I send you inclosed a small piece of music, which I think you will like. I got the air at Gordon-Castle, and I set to it the second part and bass. If it were sung with three voices, it would, I should imagine, have a very good effect.

"I lately heard two anecdotes, which deserve to be put in writing, and which you will be glad to hear. When Handel's 'Messiah' was first performed, the audience were exceedingly struck and affected by the music in general; but when that chorus struck up, 'For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth,' they were so transported, that they all, together with the King, (who happened to be present,) started up, and remained standing till the chorus ended: And hence it became the fashion in England for the audience to stand while that part of the music is performing. Some days after the first exhibition of the same divine oratorio, Mr Handel came to pay his respects to Lord Kinnoul, with whom he was particularly acquainted. His Lordship, as was natural, paid him some compliments on the noble entertainment which he had lately given the town. "My

"Lord," said Handel, "I should be sorry if I on-
"ly entertained them, I wish to make them bet-
"ter." These two anecdotes I had from Lord Kinnoul himself. You will agree with me, that the first does great honour to Handel, to music, and to the English nation: The second tends to confirm my theory, and Sir John Hawkin's testimony, that Handel, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, must have been a pious man."

## LETTER CXLVII.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 2d June, 1780.

"I had the honour to write to your Grace on my return to Aberdeen, and to send a parcel of 'Mirrors.' This will accompany the two last papers that we are to have under that title.

"I sympathise with you in your present solitude: For, though nobody knows so well as your Grace how to improve retirement, yet I do not think it is good for any of us to be quite alone.

If you go to the Glen,* I would earnestly recommend it to your Grace, to leave it to the moon and stars to adorn the night, and to be satisfied with sleeping under a canopy somewhat less sublime than that of heaven. For though, in the Eden of Gordon-Castle there is no serpent, I will not answer for the little paradise of Glenfiddich; and though walks at midnight, and slumbers in the open air, might be had last summer without harm, we have no reason to expect that the present season will be equally indulgent. I grant, that a lonely walk by moonlight is pleasing, like other intoxications; but, like them too, it is hurtful to the nerves; and I know not, whether the cold bath in the morning be a sufficient antidote. I need not inform your Grace, and I hope you will never forget, that in the evening it is particularly dangerous to walk among trees, on account of the damps. It was this that brought all his rheumatisms upon Major Mercer, though he was then in one of the best and driest climates in the world—the south of France.

"The Duke's summons was unexpectedly sudden: I hope his return will be equally so. He

* Glenfiddich.

was so good, in passing through this town, as to call on me, notwithstanding his hurry, and to desire me to go with him to Edinburgh; an invitation so very agreeable, that nothing would have hindered me from accepting it but my son's bad health. The boy was at that time very ill; and I apprehended a consumption: But he is now much better; Dr Livingston having ordered for him a preparation of bark and the vitriolic acid, which, with a strict regimen in the article of diet, has, in a few days, had the happiest effects. So that, if nothing unexpected occur, I have thoughts of going southward next week in which case, it will not be long before your Grace hear of me from Glasgow. You will probably hear from me too, if I meet with any adventure. I shall remember the commission in regard to Addison; and, if you will honour me with any other, please to direct to me at Sir William Forbes's, St Andrew's Street, Edinburgh.

" I had lately a *tête-à-tête* of several hours with Lord Kaimes and Mrs Drummond. There was no company; and we had much conversation on a great variety of subjects—your Grace and the Duke, Lord and Lady F., Mrs Montagu, David Hume, religion, episcopacy and presbyterianism,

manufactures, music, Scotch tunes, with the method of playing them, &c.; and I flatter myself, that his Lordship and I parted with some reluctance on both sides. He assured me, that he hated Mr Hume's tenets as much as I did, or could do; and he spoke of religion with great reverence. In a word, I found, from his conversation, that he is just what your Grace had described him to me, and that all the other accounts I had heard of him were wide of the truth. I would thank you, Madam, for undeceiving me in this particular, and establishing peace, and I hope amity, between us; but I have so many things to thank you for, that, if I were to enter upon that matter in detail, I should not know where to begin, and my letter would never have an end.

"Thus far I had written on Friday, when I had the honour to receive your Grace's letter of last Wednesday; which is so very flattering to me, that I cannot answer a word. I certainly left Gordon Castle with great reluctance; and my heart and my fancy did, both of them, and still do, cast

"Many a longing, lingering look behind."

The society was most agreeable; but, I flatter

myself, you will do me the justice to believe, it was not the parting with the *guests* that touched me so nearly,—though, I am sure, I love and esteem them all as much as they themselves would wish me to do.

"I delivered your message to Dr Livingston, with whom I dined the other day, in company with three sensible and cheerful Quakers. I spoke to them of my friend, and their brother, Mr Scott, (the author of the 'Eclogues,' which your Grace liked so much,) whom the Londoner very well knew; and I diverted them with the history of a dinner, with which I was once entertained by ten or twelve of their fraternity, on the King's birth-day, at one o'clock, near the confluence of the Thames and Fleet-ditch, the very spot where Pope makes his Dunces jump into the mud, in the second book of the 'Dunciad.' These Quakers were all men of learning and sense; and their manners, polite though peculiar, were to me a very entertaining novelty. Indeed, the affection they showed me, deserved, on my part, the warmest returns of gratitude.

"I have put up in a parcel for your Grace, 'Count Fathom,' 'The Tale of a Tub,' and 'Gaudentio di Lucca;' which, with the Italian 'Prayer

Book,' I have committed to a faithful hand. 'Gaudentio' (if you have never seen it) will amuse you, though there are tedious passages in it. The whole description of passing the desarts of Africa is particularly excellent. The author is no less a person than the famous Bishop Berkeley. As to the whisky, I cannot trust it in the rude hands of a carrier, and must therefore keep it till a more favourable opportunity offer: But, that it may remain sacred, I have sealed the cork of the bottle with the impression of three ladies*, whom I take to be your *Grace's* near relations, as they have the honour, not only to bear one of your titles, but also to resemble you exceedingly in form, feature, and manner. If you had lived three thousand years ago, which I am very glad you did not, there would have been four of them, and you the first. May all happiness ever attend your Grace."

* The seal he commonly used, had an impression of the three Graces.

The following letter, from Dr Johnson to Dr Beattie, is equally creditable to both: It is the unsolicited and unbiassed testimony of one who was no flatterer; and strongly marks the high degree of estimation in which he held Dr Beattie, who returned his kindness with reciprocal regard. *

## LETTER CXLVIII.

### DR SAMUEL JOHNSON TO DR BEATTIE.

Bolt-Court, Fleet-Street, 21st August, 1780.

"More years than I have any delight to reckon have past since you and I saw one another. Of this, however, there is no reason for making any reprehensory complaint, *sic fata ferunt:* But, methinks, there might pass some small inter-

* See Vol. I. p. 274.

change of regard between us. If you say, that I ought to have written, I now write; and I write to tell you, that I have much kindness for you and Mrs Beattie, and that I wish your health better, and your life long. Try change of air, and come a few degrees southward; a softer climate may do you both good. Winter is coming on, and London will be warmer, and gayer, and busier, and more fertile of amusement than Aberdeen.

"My health is better; but that will be little in the balance, when I tell you, that Mrs Montagu has been very ill, and is, I doubt, now but weakly. Mr Thrale has been very dangerously disordered, but is much better, and I hope will totally recover. He has withdrawn himself from business the whole summer. Sir Joshua and his sister are well; and Mr Davis has had great success as an author, generated by the corruption of a bookseller. More news I have not to tell you; and, therefore, you must be contented to hear, that I am," &c.

When I mentioned * the commencement of my acquaintance and epistolary intercourse with Dr Beattie, I did not conceal my apprehensions, that I might be accused of vanity, in publishing to the world those warm expressions of affection, and gratitude towards me, which occur in almost every letter I received from him; and of which, for that reason, I have suppressed by far the greatest part. But I should deem myself, not only unworthy of the friendship of Dr Beattie, but destitute of the best feelings of our nature, were I insensible to what he says in the following letter, written a short time after he had passed some weeks in our house at Edinburgh. Indeed, his partiality to every one of my family was very remarkable; and his esteem and admiration of that best part of it, in particular, of whom it has since pleased Heaven to deprive me, but the memory of whose talents and virtues will

* Vol. I. p. 92.

never be erased from my heart, could not but be very grateful to me.

I trust, therefore, that the reader will pardon me, if I dwell with no common fondness on what he wrote on a subject, then so interesting to me, and to which the hand of time has now given an interest still more affecting.

## LETTER CXLIX.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 6th November, 1780.

"Your letter, my dear Sir, from Oxford, which I received a few days ago, gave me great pleasure, on account of the agreeable information it brought me of Lady Forbes's health and yours, and of your amusing journey. I know, from Pennant's 'Welsh Tour,' that there are many things in that country worthy of the traveller's attention; many wild and many soothing scenes, and many noble monuments of war, and of superstitious and feudal magnificence. Such things, to a mind turned like yours, would have a charm inexpressible; and would be highly amusing to

Lady Forbes, whose mind is, if I mistake not, as open to the impressions of romantic art and nature, as either yours or mine; which, I will venture to say, is a bold word. Accept of my hearty welcome to your own house and home, which I hope you have reached before this time; for, in this season of tempest and immature winter, I should be sorry to think that you and your amiable associate were struggling with the inconveniences of deep roads, cold inns, and short days. I hope you got William settled to your mind during your absence; and that, at your return, you found him, and my friend Miss Forbes, and my sworn brother John, and my acquaintance James, and the other young gentleman, who, I hope, will one day be my acquaintance, in perfect health, and as flourishing as I wish them to be.

"The many kind attentions I received from my friends in Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, particularly from Lady Forbes and you, and Mr Arbuthnot, did me the greatest service; and I returned home a new man. But then I instantly found myself plunged into such a chaos of perplexity, as at once swallowed up all the little health I had been collecting from so many quarters; and, after a few days ineffectual wrangling,

I was necessitated (I will not say to go, but) to run away to Peterhead, taking my son along with me; and there I remained seven weeks. To unfold the causes of this perplexity, would, I think, require two volumes as large as the 'Sorrows of Werter:'* I will not therefore attempt it at present. I shall only say, that it did not arise from a certain circumstance which lies nearest my heart, (for in that there is not the least variation,) but from the unreasonableness of some persons with whom I am connected, and who, having not much sensibility themselves, can hardly make allowance for that of other people. However, matters are now a little softened, and seem to promise tranquillity, at least for a short time; and a very small abatement of trouble is a sort of tranquillity to one, who, like me, has been so long buffeted, on all sides, by more storms than are commonly found to assail a person so insignificant as I am. Dr Livingston knows every circumstance of what I allude to.† I have in every

* A German novel, much in fashion at that time.

† Dr Thomas Livingston, a physician at Aberdeen, of the first eminence, between whom and Dr Beattie there long subsisted the most intimate friendship. He died the 9th March, 1785.

thing been governed by his advice; for I begin to distrust my own faculties, as I feel them sensibly impaired. At any rate, I am sure I will do well in doing what he recommended; as I have always found him a most intelligent, prudent, and affectionate friend, as well as one of the ablest of his profession. I shall some time hereafter explain myself to you on this subject very particularly. At present, I wish rather to decline troubling you in regard to it.

"I am glad you met with the Bishop of Bangor. I knew him formerly when he was Dean of Canterbury;* and I once passed a morning in company with his lady Mrs Moore, at Dr Markham's, then Bishop of Chester, now Archbishop of York. Your account of Dr Moore is very just; he is really a most worthy man. By the bye, I think the English bench of Bishops was never more respectable, than at present, for learning and piety."

* Afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

## LETTER CL.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Whitehall, 16th May, 1781.

"I have seen most of the fashionable curiosities; but will not trouble your Grace with any particular account of them. The exhibition of pictures at the Royal Academy is the best of the kind I have seen. The best pieces, in my opinion, are, Thais (with a torch in her hand); the Death of Dido; and a Boy, supposed to be listening to a wonderful story; these three by Sir Joshua Reynolds: a Shepherd-boy, by Gainsborough: some Landscapes, by Barrett. Christ healing the Sick, by West, is a prodigious great work, and has in it great variety of expression; but there is a glare and a hardness in the colouring, which makes it look more like a picture than like nature. Gainsborough's picture of the King is the strongest likeness I have ever seen; his Queen too is very well: but he has not given them attitudes becoming their rank; the King

has his hat in his hand, and the Queen looks as if she were going to curtsey in the beginning of a minuet. Others may think differently: I give my own opinion.

"There is nothing at either playhouse that is in the least captivating; nor, I think, one player, Mrs Abington excepted, whom one would wish to see a second time. I was shocked at Leoni, in

"Had I a heart for falsehood framed," &c.

A man singing with a woman's voice, sounds as unnatural to me, as a woman singing with a man's. Either may do in a private company, where it is enough if people are diverted; but, on a stage, where nature ought to be imitated, both are in my opinion intolerable.

"Johnson's new 'Lives' are published. He is, as your Grace heard he would be, very severe on my poor friend, Gray. His life of Pope is excellent; and in all his lives there is merit, as they contain a great variety of sound criticism and pleasing information. He has not done justice to Lord Lyttelton. He has found means to pay me a very great compliment, for which I am

much obliged to him, in speaking of Mr Gray's journey into Scotland in 1765.*

"Copley's picture of Lord Chatham's Death is an exhibition of itself. It is a vast collection of portraits, some of them very like: but, excepting three or four of the personages present, few of this vast assembly seem to be much affected with the great event; which divests the picture of its unity, and will in the next age make it cease to be interesting."

## LETTER CLI.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Middle Scotland-yard, Whitehall, 1st June, 1781.

"If you will not allow eating and drinking, and walking and visiting, to be work, I must confess I have for these five weeks been very idle. Yet in such a perpetual hurry have I been kept by this sort of idleness, that I had no time to

* Speaking of that journey, Dr Johnson says, "He (Mr Gray) "naturally contracted a friendship with Dr Beattie, whom he "found a poet, a philosopher, and a good man."—JOHNSON'S *Lives*, Vol. IV. p. 471.

write, to read, or even to think. For the amusement of my young fellow-traveller, * and in order also to drive away painful ideas from myself, I have run through a complete *Encyclopedie* of shows, and monsters, and other curiosities, from 'Douglas' at Drury-Lane, to the puppet-show at Astley's riding-school; from the wonderful heifer with two heads, to Dr Graham and his celestial brilliancy; from the great lion in the Tower, and the stuffed elephant's skin at Sir Ashton Lever's, to the little Welch woman in Holborn, who, though twenty-three years of age, weighs only eighteen pounds.

"But, what you will readily believe to have been much more beneficial to my health and spirits, I have been visiting all my friends again and again, and found them as affectionate and attentive as ever. Death has indeed deprived me of some since I was last here, of Garrick, and Armstrong, and poor Harry Smith; but I have still many left; some of whom are higher in the world, and in better health, than they were in 1775, and all as well and as flourishing as I had any reason to expect.

* His son.

"I have seen Mr Langton several times, and I gave him your memorandum relating to M. Trembley. He goes to Chatham in a few days with his family, in quality of engineer; and I intend to make him a visit there, having some curiosity to see the shipping and the fortifications. You certainly know that Mr Langton is an officer of militia. He loves the military life, and has been indefatigable in acquiring the knowledge that is necessary to it. He is allowed to be a most excellent engineer. Indeed, he is excellent in every thing. *

* Bennet Langton, Esq. of Langton, in the county of Lincoln, LL. D. a gentleman no less eminent for his virtues, than for his ardent love of literature. Inheriting a paternal fortune, that rendered him independent of any profession, he devoted himself to the study of letters, which he cultivated with uncommon assiduity, first at the grammar-schools of Kensington, Reading, and Beverly, afterwards at Trinity-College, Oxford. His favourite study was Greek, in which he became very learned; he was an excellent Latin scholar, and had even acquired a knowledge of the Hebrew. He had a thorough acquaintance with the French language, and read also the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese.

But his successful and extraordinary acquirements in literature, were by no means the most remarkable parts of Mr Langton's character. His exemplary piety, his singular humility, and his unwearied endeavours in the exercise of the great duties of charity and benevolence, were his brightest ornaments. It was the emphatic testimony of Dr Johnson in his favour, "I

"Johnson grows in grace as he grows in years. He not only has better health and a fresher com-

"know not who will go to Heaven if Langton does not: Sir, I "could almost say, *Sit anima mea cum Langtono;*"‖ and when Mr Boswell, to whom the Doctor made the remark, mentioned a very eminent friend of theirs as a virtuous man, Johnson's reply was,—"Yes, Sir, but he has not the evangelical virtue of "Langton." On another occasion he said to Mr Boswell, with a vehemence of affectionate regard,—"The earth does not bear "a worthier man than Bennet Langton."§

His acquaintance with Dr Johnson commenced in a manner somewhat singular. When Mr Langton was no more than sixteen years of age, and before he went to the university, having read, with a high degree of admiration, Dr Johnson's celebrated 'Rambler,' which was first published about that period, he travelled to London chiefly with a view of becoming acquainted with its author. In this he succeeded; and Johnson, being struck with his great piety, love of learning, and suavity of manners, conceived a warm affection for him; while he, on the other hand, was charmed with Dr Johnson, whose ideas and sentiments he found congenial with those he had early imbibed at home. From that period, notwithstanding a considerable disparity of years, a most intimate friendship took place between them, which lasted, without the slightest interruption, as long as Johnson lived. When the death of his inestimable friend drew near, Mr Langton attended him constantly, and soothed some of his last hours with the most pleasing and affectionate assiduity. Once, when Mr Langton was sitting by his bedside, Dr Johnson is said to have seized his hand, and to have exclaimed, with great emphasis,—"*Te teneam moriens deficiente* "*manu.*"

‖ Boswell's Life of Johnson, 3d Edit. Vol. IV. p. 294.

§ Ibid. Vol. III. p. 175.

plexion than ever he had before, (at least since I knew him,) but he has contracted a gentleness

Nor did this amiable person, with all his attachment to literature, shut himself up in his library, or pass his time in literary indolence. Having engaged in that constitutional defence of his country, the militia, he laid aside his classical studies for a time, and resolved to make himself thoroughly master of military tactics. In this pursuit he employed himself with such assiduity, that in no long period he became an excellent officer. He acquired the esteem and admiration of his brother-officers, not only by his worth and learning, but by his elegant manners, and an inexhaustible fund of entertaining conversation; while he procured the love of the soldiers, by his mildness and humanity, which were so great, that he was never, in a single instance, betrayed into passion, nor ever heard to utter an oath.

So high stood his reputation for integrity and knowledge, that many years after he had left Beverly, where he had received a part of his education, a considerable number of the most respectable voters of that borough came to him, and invited him to offer himself a candidate at the ensuing election, promising him their support; to which they were induced without any personal acquaintance, merely from the high opinion they entertained of his character. An offer, however, which, from motives of conscience, he thought proper to decline.

Mr Langton was a member of the Literary Club;‖ and, at the time of his death, was the only original member remaining. It consisted of some of the most eminent persons of the age; and among them Mr Langton had the happiness to number among his intimate friends, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr Johnson, Mr Burke, Mr Beauclerk, Mr Garrick, Dr Goldsmith, Dr Warton, Mr Chamier, Mr Boswell; all of whom paid the debt of

‖ For an account of this elegant literary society, see Boswell's Life of Johnson, Vol. I. p. 499.

of manners which pleases every body.* Some ascribe this to the good company to which he has of late been more accustomed than in the early part of his life. There may be something in this; but I am apt to think the good health he has enjoyed for a long time is the chief cause. Mr Thrale appointed him one of his executors, and left him two hundred pounds: every body says he should have left him two hundred a-year; which, from a fortune like his, would have been a very inconsiderable deduction."

nature before him. In January 1785, his Majesty, thinking him the fittest person to succeed Dr Johnson, did Mr Langton the honour to appoint him Professor of Ancient Literature in the Royal Academy.

He married the Countess-dowager of Rothes, by whom he had a numerous family, and died on the 10th December, 1801, in the 65th year of his age.

It is with peculiar delight, that I contemplate the character of this pious and worthy man, whose virtues I revere, and whose example I could wish to imitate. I was happy in his friendship and unreserved epistolary intercourse, during the long period of nearly thirty years.

* See p. 253.

## LETTER CLII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

London, 3d June, 1781.

"Your Grace's letter gave me more pleasure than words can express. I see from it, you are in good health and spirits, and that you do me the honour sometimes to think of me. I meet with the greatest civilities here every day, from persons for whom I have the highest esteem; yet so far am I from entertaining any idea of remaining among them, that I begin to look forward with some impatience to that day on which I am again to set my face northwards, and which I think is not above three weeks distant: and I hope, that, in three or four weeks more, I shall have the honour to present you with as many pens* at Peterhead, as will convey to all your friends the most pleasing intelligence.

"The thunder is roaring while I write this; and a most welcome sound it is to me, as it will

* Dr Beattie alludes here to the following epigram, written

bring rain and coolness, of which the country stands, and I stand, very much in need. For some days past the heat has been intolerable; the mercury in the thermometer being at 80°, or, as some say, 83°, which is five degrees higher, at least, than ever I knew it in Scotland. Persons who have been in the West Indies say, that the Jamaica heat is much more tolerable. In this situation, it is no wonder that I should often think of the shades of the holly-bank at Gordon-castle, and the sea-breezes of Peterhead.

"The Persees, or Gentoos, or (as some call them) the Persian ambassadors, are at present one of the great curiosities of the town. They are charged with some embassy from their own country; but what that is nobody knows. Lord William Gordon did me the honour to make me one of a large party, whom he lately invited to Green-park Lodge to see them. By means of a

at Peterhead, when there in company with the Duchess of Gordon the autumn preceding:

*Extempore with a Pen, sent to her Grace the Duchess of* GORDON.

Go, and be guided by the brightest eyes,
And to the softest hand thine aid impart,
To trace the fair ideas, as they rise
Warm, from the purest, gentlest, noblest heart.

gentleman, who acted as their interpreter, I asked them several questions, to which they returned pertinent answers. They are dressed in the manner of their country, in long robes of a whitish-coloured stuff resembling Indian silk, with turbans on their heads, differing however from the Turkish turbans. Their complexion is a yellowish black, resembling the mulatto colour, with mustachios or whiskers of the deepest black, as are also their eyes. Their features are regular, and of the European cast: the younger of the two may be called handsome; and the elder, who is his father, has a most expressive, sensible countenance. Though many people of great rank were present, particularly the Duke of Gloucester, Lord and Lady Pembroke, Lady Frances Scot, Lady Irvine and all her daughters, the three Lady Waldegraves, Lord Herbert, &c. the strangers behaved with great ease, as well as with great courtesy. Lord William presented me to the Duke of Gloucester, with whom I had the honour of a short conversation, and who made me very happy in saying, that he had heard your Grace speak of me."

## LETTER CLIII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

London, 28th June, 1781.

"I have seen Bishop Hurd* once and again; and last Sunday at Canewood passed a truly classical day with Lord Mansfield and him. I never saw Lord Mansfield better. He is in perfect health and good spirits, and looks no older than fifty-five. He walked with me three miles and a half, without the least appearance of fatigue.†

"The Bishop of Chester has been gone some time, and several others of my friends have left

* Bishop of Worcester; between whom and Dr Beattie there existed a mutual respect and esteem. This venerable Prelate is the well-known author of 'An Introduction to the study of the Prophecies concerning the Christian Church:' 'A Commentary and Notes on Horace's Art of Poetry:' 'Moral and Political Dialogues:' 'Sermons preached at Lincoln's-inn,' and 'A Moral Dissertation of the Truth of the Christian Religion.' Dr Beattie has elsewhere said, that he thought the Bishop of London and Bishop of Worcester the two best preachers he ever heard. ‡

† See Vol. I. p. 296.

‡ Page 154.

the town; so that as my business is finished, or nearly so, I have nothing to keep me longer here. I hope we shall meet in little more than a fortnight.

"Mrs Montagu, on going to her country-seat in Berkshire, about a month ago, was seized with a violent illness. The physicians sent her instantly to Bath, where she has been ever since. I had the pleasure to learn last night, by a letter from her own hand, that she is now quite well.

"I went lately to Rochester, on a visit to Mr Langton and Lady Rothes; who desire to be remembered to Lady Forbes and you. Mr Langton has sent me Trembley's book, which I shall take proper care of. At Chatham I saw that wonderful sight, a ninety-gun ship on the stocks: but, from the top of Shooters-hill, on my return, I saw a sight still more magnificent, a complete view of this huge metropolis from Chelsea to Blackwall, the back-ground embellished with a violent storm of thunder and lightning, which roared and flashed without intermission.

"I thought it my duty to appear at the levee before I left London; and accordingly the week before last I went to court. The King had not seen me for six years, and yet, to my surprise,

knew me at first sight. He spoke to me with his wonted condescension and affability; and paid me a very polite compliment on the subject of my writings."

## LETTER CLIV.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 21st November, 1781.

"In calling your Grace's attention to an 'Essay on Beauty,' I am afraid I shall incur the same censure with a brother-professor of mine, who had the assurance to deliver, in the hearing of the greatest commander on earth, a dissertation on the art of war. "Many a fool have I seen in "my time," said Hannibal, "but this old block-"head exceeds them all."

"However, one must keep one's word; and, as your Grace desired to see this Essay, and I promised to send it, (as soon as I could get it transcribed,) I send it accordingly. I should not give you the trouble to return it, if I had not promised a reading of it to Sir Joshua Reynolds. As it is only an extract from 'A Discourse on

Memory and Imagination,' (which your Grace could not find time to look into at Peterhead, and which it is impossible for me to send at present, as I am correcting it for the press,) I am afraid you will find some obscurity in it, especially towards the beginning.

"If the last letter had not miscarried, which I had the honour to write to your Grace, you would have known, that I am now very busy in revising and transcribing papers; as I am to put a quarto volume to press in little more than a month; and a quarto not much smaller than my last. Your Grace has seen a good deal of it, but not the whole."

## LETTER CLV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. MR WILLIAMSON.

Aberdeen, 5th December, 1781.

"If Dr Horne * be returned to Oxford, I beg

* Afterwards Bishop of Norwich, author of 'A Letter to Adam Smith, LL. D. on the Life, Death, and Philosophy of his friend David Hume, Esq. by one of the People called CHRISTIANS.' Printed at Oxford in the year 1777.

you will take the first opportunity to present my best respects to him, and assure him, that I shall ever retain a most grateful sense of the honour he has done me in his elegant letter to Adam Smith. This acknowledgment comes rather late; but it is not on that account the less sincere. Why it has been so long delayed, I now beg leave to explain.

"The first notice I received of Dr Horne's excellent pamphlet, was in a short letter from you, which came at a time when my health was in so bad a way, that most of my friends here thought I had not many weeks to live. These sufferings, I must acknowledge, drove all literary matters out of my head: your letter was lost; and of Dr Horne's pamphlet I heard nothing more, till this last summer, when Lord Mansfield asked me, whether I had seen it, speaking of it, at the same time, in terms of the highest approbation. I was forced to confess I had not seen it, and never heard of it but once; and, to account for this, I told his Lordship what I have now told you. At Oxford, you will probably remember, that I found it in the beginning of July last, and then it was, that I knew for the first time the extent of my obligations to Dr Horne. I wished immediately,

as you know, to pay my respects to him, but he was gone out of town. Since my return from England, I find the pamphlet has given universal satisfaction; and some of my friends have wished, that a small and cheap edition of it could be printed, and circulated all over the country, as they think it might counterwork the unwearied efforts which Mr Hume's friends have long been making to extol his character, and depress mine."

## LETTER CLVI.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 18th August, 1782.

"I had the honour to receive your Grace's letter, and the noble present inclosed in it,* just as I was setting out for Edinburgh. After many attempts to thank you for it, and to tell you how much I glory in it, I find I must at last confine my gratitude and my exultations to my own breast; having no words that can in any degree do them justice. It is indeed a most charming

* A portrait of the Duchess of Gordon.

picture, and an exact copy of Sir Joshua's; and I am envied the possession of it by every one who sees it. Mr Smith has outdone himself on the occasion; I am exceedingly obliged to him.

"Your Grace will perhaps remember, that at Gordon-castle there was some conversation about Petrarch. Knowing that it was the custom of his age to write gallant verses; and conjecturing, from other circumstances, that his passion for Laura was not so serious a business as his French biographer pretends, I happened to say, that there was some reason to think, that he wrote his Italian sonnets as much to display his wit as to declare his passion. I have since made some discoveries in regard to this matter, which amount to what follows:

"That Petrarch's passion for the lady was so far sincere, as to give him uneasiness, appears from an account of his life and character, written by himself in Latin prose, and prefixed to a folio edition of his works, of which I have a copy, printed in the year 1554. But that his love was of that permanent and overwhelming nature, which some writers suppose, or that it continued to the end of his life, (as a late writer affirms,) there is good reason to doubt, upon the same au-

thority. Nay, there is presumptive, and even positive evidence of the contrary; and that he was less subject, than most men can pretend to be, to the tyranny of the 'Winged Boy.'

"The presumptive evidence is founded on the very laborious life which he must have led in the pursuits of literature. His youth was employed in study, at a time when study was extremely difficult, on account of the scarcity of books and of teachers. He became the most learned man of his time; and to his labour in transcribing several ancient authors, with his own hand, we are indebted for their preservation. His works, in my edition of them, fill 1455 folio pages, closely printed; of which the Italian Sonnets are not more than a twentieth part: the rest being Latin Essays, Dialogues, &c. and an epic poem in Latin verse, called 'Africa,' as long as 'Paradise Lost.' His retirement at Vaucluse, (which in Latin he calls Clausa,) was by no means devoted to love and Laura. "There," says he, in the account of his life above mentioned, "almost all the works "I ever published were completed, or begun, or "planned; and they were so many," these are his words, "that even to these years they employ "and fatigue me." In a word, Petrarch wrote

more than I could transcribe in twenty years; and more than I think he could have composed, though he had studied without intermission, in forty. Can it be believed, that a man of extreme sensibility, pining, from twenty-five to the end of his life, in hopeless love, could be so zealous a student, and so voluminous a writer?

"But more direct evidence we have from himself, in his own account above mentioned of his life, conversation, and character. I must not translate the passage literally, on account of an indelicate word or two; but I shall give the sense of it: "In my youth I was violently in love; "but it was only once; and the passion was ho- "nourable, or virtuous; and would have conti- "nued longer, if the flame, *already decaying*, had "not *been extinguished* by a death, which was "bitter indeed, but useful." And a little after, he says: "*Before I was forty years of age*, I had "banished from my mind every idea of love, as "effectually as if I had never seen a woman." He adds some things, in a strain of bitterness, execrating the *belle passion*, as what he had always hated as a vile and a disgraceful servitude.

"In the above passage, your Grace will observe, that Petrarch does not name his mistress. This, if we consider the manners of that age, and the piety and good sense of Petrarch, may make us doubt whether Laura was really the object of his passion. I had this doubt for a little while: but Hieronymo Squarzafichi, a writer of that age, and the author of another Latin Life of Petrarch, prefixed to the same edition of his works, positively says, that the name of the lady whom the poet loved was Lauretta, which her admirer changed to Laura. The name, thus changed, supplies him with numberless allusions to the laurel, and to the story of Apollo and Daphne. Might not Petrarch, in many of his sonnets, have had an allegorical reference to *the poetical laurel*, which was offered him at one and the same time by deputies from France and from Italy; and with which, to his great satisfaction, he was actually crowned at Rome with the customary solemnities? In this view, his love of fame and of poetry would happily coincide with his tenderness for Laura, and give peculiar enthusiasm to such of his thoughts as might relate to any one of the three passions,

"But how, you will say, is all this to be reconciled to the account given by the French author of that Life of Petrarch, which Mrs Dobson has abridged in English?

"I answer: First, That Petrarch's own account of his life, in serious prose, is not to be called in question: and, Secondly, That to a French biographer, in a matter of this kind, no degree of credit is due. I have seen pretended lives, in French, of Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, &c. in which there was hardly one word of truth; the greatest part being fable, and that sort of declamation which some people call *sentiment*. And your Grace knows, that no other character belongs to the 'Belisarius' and 'Incas of Peru' by Marmontel. The French Life of Petrarch I consider in the same light; and that what is said of his *manuscript* letters and memoirs, is no better than a job contrived by the bookseller, and executed by the author."

## LETTER CLVII.

### JOHN SCOTT* TO DR BEATTIE.

Ratcliff-cross, London, 10th May, 1782.

"Accept my best thanks for thy very kind and acceptable letter. I am now happy enough to be

* John Scott, of Amwell, near Ware, in Hertfordshire, was, as this letter indicates, one of the people called Quakers; a poet of no mean genius, as his Eclogues, Elegies, Odes, and other pieces, which have been collected and published, amply testify His two longest works are, "Amwell," a descriptive poem, and "An Essay on Painting." He was not less distinguished by the blameless simplicity of his manners, than by the warmth of his friendship, and the activity of his benevolence. Though bred to no profession, he was far from leading a life of idleness or inactivity; but while he amused himself with poetry and gardening, of which he was uncommonly fond, he employed much of his time in works of public utility in the vicinity of his residence. He published a pamphlet, full of good sense and philanthropy, entitled, "Observations on the Present State of the Parochial and Vagrant Poor." He frequently interfered in their distresses, and was ever ready to stand forward as the arbitrator of differences among his neighbours. In general, he seems to have imitated the philanthropy of that well-known character, "The Man of Ross." Dr Beattie, with whom, among other literary persons, he had become acquainted, and between whom a similarity of taste had produced an intimate friendship, alludes,

able to say, that I have finished my volume of 'Poems.' I shall wait, with some anxiety, for my friend's opinion of some of the contents, particularly the 'Oriental Eclogues,' the 'Mexican Prophecy,' and the 'Essay on Painting;' for on these, as far as I can trust my own judgment, I think must much depend the rank I may be allowed to hold as a poet. I should like also to know which of the smaller odes most obtained my friend's approbation. The 'Essay on Paint-

in one of his letters,† to this part of Mr Scott's character: "I "am astonished," says Dr Beattie, "at the activity of your "mind, and the versatility of your genius. It is really amazing, "that one and the same person should, in one and the same "year, publish the most elegant poems, and 'A Digest of Laws "relating to the Highways.' Go on, Sir, in your laudable re-"solution of delighting and instructing mankind, of patronising "the poor, and promoting the public weal."

This amiable man died of a putrid fever at London, the 12th December, 1783, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

See a well-written life, and critical remarks on his works, by Dr Anderson, prefixed to his poems in "The British Poets," Vol. XI. p. 717.

† In 1778, with a friendly zeal, he undertook the defence of his friend Dr Beattie, from an anonymous attack in "The Gentleman's Magazine," for January, in a letter in the same Magazine for March following, to which he signed his name, and received Dr Beattie's acknowledgments on the occasion.

ing' was an after-thought; it was begun when the previous part of the book was printed, and finished in about five weeks; it was therefore a hasty, though, I hope, not an incorrect, performance. I had designed (as I mention in the introduction) something of this kind long before Hayley's 'Epistle to Romney' appeared, but had laid it aside. Happening to write a few lines on the subject, with an intent to introduce them into another poem, where I afterwards found them not easily introducible, and thinking them too good to be lost, I determined on the work in question, where I knew they would appear with propriety. Thus, from very small, and indeed unforeseen circumstances, things of some importance often arise. I endeavoured, as much as possible, to avoid the same ground that Hayley had trodden. On Landscape he had said little; I had therefore room to expatiate. On Portrait he had said much; and I was necessitated to say something; but even there I wished not to imitate, but rather to rival, my predecessor. Hayley's piece has great merit, but is tedious from its length and inequality. That kind of rhyming prose, used by Dryden in his earlier works, seems coming much into fashion; but I am clear it

must be a vicious taste that gives it encouragement. For the couplet versification, we can have no better model than that of Pope; or if that can be at all improved, it must be by a sparing use of Dryden's manner in what (notwithstanding I have the authority of Johnson against me) I do not hesitate to call the best poetry he ever wrote, his 'Tales' and 'Fables.' Another vicious mode of composition seems also to be gaining ground, which, if adopted, will almost absolutely destroy the distinction between two species of writing, which should be ever kept separate—rhyme and blank verse: I mean, breaking the lines of couplets; or, in other words, running the sense too much from one line to another. This is countenanced by one very good poet, Meikle, translator of 'The Lusiad,' who, in a fine poem, entitled, 'Almada-hill,' has practised it to an excess, and by that means injured his poetry. I am told, Mason is about a translation of Fresnoy's 'Poem on Painting.' The original, as far as I can judge, reads flat and dry. Dryden's prose version does not mend it. What charms Mason's poetical powers may bestow upon it, I do not pretend to determine. There is more in expression than we often are aware of. The same thought in dif-

ferent language will disgust or delight us. So just is the axiom of Pope,—

"True wit,* is nature to advantage dressed;
"What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

"I believe I mentioned in a former letter, that I had seen Bryant on the 'Rowleyan Controversy,' and that Dean Milles had published a pompous quarto edition of the author. Both these gentlemen have been completely answered, in a very good and decisive pamphlet, by Mr Thomas Warton; and Milles has been most severely ridiculed in an archaiological epistle. This is an excellent performance of the serio-humorous kind: it is pretty boldly attributed to Mason; but I scarcely think it is his. Mason has given us nothing avowedly his own, but of the sublime or pathetic, as far as I can recollect. I should rather fix this new production on the yet undiscovered author of the famous 'Heroic Epistle;" they certainly breathe the same spirit of poetry and politics.

* I should rather have said true poetry; or indeed good composition of any species.

"Did I ever mention Dr Johnson's prefaces? My friend has doubtless seen that fund of entertainment and information; of striking observations, and useful reflections; of good sense, and of illiberal prejudices; of just and of unjust criticism. That a mind, so enlarged as Johnson's, in some respects, should be so confined in others, is amazing. The titled scribblers of the last century; the prosaic Denham, the inane and quaint Yalden, and even the Grub-street Pomfret, meet with all possible favour. Every man who expresses sentiments of religious or political liberty; every man who writes in blank verse, or writes pastoral; and every man contemporary with himself—is sure to meet with no mercy. To Blackmore, I think, he has done but justice. Blackmore, with all his absurdities, was a poet; his poem on 'The Creation,' (tedious as it is) sufficiently proves it. Pope, and his brother wits, were too hard upon Blackmore: it was very well to point out his faults, but ungenerous to stigmatise him as an absolute dunce. Dr Johnson has very properly estimated the merits of Prior, whose poetical powers were too highly rated by the readers of his own time; though it must be allowed, that much of his 'Solomon,' and some

of his 'Henry and Emma,' is real poetry. Dyer, Shenstone, Collins, Akenside, and Gray, are the authors whom I most regret as sufferers by Johnson's unjust censure: and what must one think of the critic's taste, who could prefer Dryden's wretched, conceited 'Ode on Mrs Killigrew,' to the 'British Bard' of our English Pindar?

"As soon as thy health and avocations will permit, I shall be glad of a few lines from a friend, whose correspondence is always highly acceptable."

## LETTER CLVIII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 25th October, 1782.

"Elphinston's 'Martial' is just come to hand. It is truly an *unique*. The specimens formerly published did very well to laugh at; but a whole quarto of nonsense and gibberish, is too much. It is strange that a man, not wholly illiterate, should have lived so long in England, without learning the language.

"I have lately been very much entertained

and instructed with a work of a different nature, which will do honour to this country, and be a blessing to mankind—Dr Campbell's 'Translation of the Four Gospels,' with explanatory and critical annotations. I have revised the first eighteen chapters of Matthew; and am really astonished at the learning and accuracy of the author. He had before given the world sufficient proofs of both; but this will be his greatest work. It will be accompanied with preliminary dissertations, for explaining what could not be conveniently illustrated in the notes. I have read the titles of the Dissertations, and shall soon have them in my hands. The whole will make, as I guess, two quarto volumes. I have several times studied the Gospels in the original; but had no idea, till now, that the common translation stood so much in need of a revisal."

## LETTER CLIX.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 30th January, 1783.

"I lately had the happiness to receive from the Bishop of Chester the most agreeable accounts of your health; which no perplexities of my own can ever make me cease, even for a single hour, to be interested in.

"Your little godson, who was all last summer in the country, returned home in October, and since that time has been under my own inspection; which, till now, the peculiar circumstances of my family did not permit him to be. I found him wild, and not very tractable; though not destitute either of affection or of generosity. He had been committed to the care of people, who, it seems, thought it too soon to inure him to moral discipline. But as that part of education cannot, in my opinion, begin too early, I have been combating his evil habits with all the caution and steadiness I am master of; and my success has been not inconsiderable. I have taught him to

fear my anger above every thing, (for he is too young to be impressed with any fear of a higher kind;) and I find, that the more he fears, the more he loves me. His brother co-operates with me in this good work; and I hope we shall in time make him a very good boy. He is stout and healthy, and the picture of good humour and good cheer, and a very great favourite in the neighbourhood. Bodily correction I have never used as yet; considering it as a dangerous remedy, which ought not to be had recourse to, till all others have been tried and found ineffectual. My other boy is busy at his French and Greek. I thought him too young to go into the higher classes, and have made him study the elements of Greek a second time. He is not, I think, very lucky in a French master. The man speaks the language well enough, but does not seem to be an exact grammarian: however, my boy knows grammar pretty well, and has always been accustomed to study with accuracy; so that I hope he is in no danger of getting into habits of superficial reading.

"We have been here, and still are, in great apprehensions of famine. Last summer was cold and tempestuous beyond imagination; and in

many parts of the country there was little or no harvest. Oatmeal, without which our common people have no notion of supporting life, sells just now at double its usual price; and the common people are murmuring; and anonymous letters, in a threatening style, have been sent to many persons. In no other part of Scotland is the scarcity so great as in this town and neighbourhood; and I believe it is the fear of the military alone that prevents insurrection.

"I am just now informed, that preliminaries of peace with France and Spain are signed, and that a cessation of hostilities is agreed on with the Dutch. The news is certainly very agreeable, if the conditions be but moderately good. Whether our separation from America will be beneficial or hurtful, either to this country or to that, is, I think, doubtful: but such a separation must have happened soon; and I wish it had happened forty years sooner. Though our empire is diminished in extent, our national honour is not impaired; and our enemies, notwithstanding what they have gained, and we have lost, have no cause of triumph.

"My new book has been in the press for some time; and I have now received sixteen sheets of

it, which is about one-fifth of the whole. It is a quarto, of the same size nearly with my last; and, what I have seen, is very correctly printed. The proprietor, Mr Strahan, thinks it will be ready for publication in the spring. I am afraid the plainness and simplicity of the style will not hit the taste of the present race of orators and critics; who seem to think, that the old English tongue, and the old English constitution, stand equally in need of change. Their reasonings, however, have not yet satisfied me, that our forefathers were at all inferior to us in the arts either of writing, or of government. My models of English are Addison, and those who write like Addison, particularly yourself, Madam, and Lord Lyttelton. We may be allowed to imitate what we cannot hope to equal; nay, I think we are, in every laudable pursuit, commanded by all the great teachers of mankind to do so.

"The literary labours of Lord Kaimes have come to an end at last. He was certainly an extraordinary man: and, though he cannot be vindicated in every thing, his enemies must allow, that his mind was uncommonly active, and his industry indefatigable. He was six-and-fifty years an author; for to a Collection of Decisions, dated

in 1726, I have seen a preface of his writing. He retained his good humour to the last. He and I misunderstood one another for several years; but we were thoroughly reconciled long before his death, and he acknowledged that he had utterly mistaken my character.

"I am very happy to find, that my notions, in regard to the origin of language, coincide so exactly with yours. I have, I think, confuted Monboddo's theory; which I look upon as equally absurd and dangerous. He and Lord Kaimes passed a few days last autumn together at Gordon-Castle, and gave no little entertainment to the company; for they two were in every thing direct opposites; and they mutually despised and detested each other. Kaimes confessed that he understood no Greek; and Monboddo told him, that no man who was ignorant of Greek could pretend to write a page of good English. Monboddo has many good qualities: but on the subject of Greek and of Aristotle, he is as absurd and as pedantic as Don Quixote was on that of chivalry. The last time I saw him, I incensed him to the highest degree, by calling the great circumnavigator Cook an ingenious philosopher. It was to no purpose that I explained the sense in which

I used the word, and told him, that by *philosophy*, I meant *the knowledge of nature applied to practical and useful purposes:* he seemed to think that I had offered an insult *to science*, by calling a man a philosopher, whose only merit, he said, was "that of being a good seaman, even as one may "be an expert shoemaker or tailor, and who, be-"sides, was of an obscure origin: for I hold," said he, "that in men, as well as in horses, no-"thing can be *great* but what is *noble*." It was, indeed, in opposition to this notable aphorism, that I had mentioned the name of Cook with that encomium which provoked the wrath of Monboddo."

## LETTER CLX.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 2d March, 1783.

"I have been more idle, and more in company this winter than I used to be; which the doctor tells me is good for my health. But I have not been quite idle. I have revised, with all the attention I am master of, Dr Campbell's new

translation of Matthew and Mark, with the notes upon it, and ten or twelve of his preliminary dissertations; and that this revisal has been the work of some time, you will readily believe, when I tell you, that I have written, of critical remarks, not less than seventy or eighty quarto pages. Many of these, indeed, I thought of little moment; but as lovers before marriage are advised to be as quick-sighted, and after marriage as blind as possible, to one another's faults, so I consider it as my duty to be as captious as possible in the revisal of a friend's work before publication, and when it is published to be captious no longer. The Principal, however, is pleased to think more favourably than I do of my strictures, and tells me he has adopted nine-tenths of them. Of the translation of Luke and John, and the notes upon it, and of four or five more preliminary dissertations, he has the materials almost ready; but they are not yet put together. The whole will amount to two large quartos at least; and will, in my opinion, be one of the most important publications that has appeared in our time. It is really a treasure of theological learning, exact criticism, and sound divinity; and has given me more information, in regard to what may be

called scriptural knowledge, than all the other books I ever read. His translation conveys the meaning of the original very correctly, and, so far as I could observe, neither adds nor takes away a single idea; but I have told him, that I wish it had been more strictly literal, and more conformable to the Greek (or rather to the Hebrew) idiom, which is in many things congenial to the English. His love of conciseness makes him sometimes less simple, though perhaps not less expressive, than the original, and sometimes less harmonious than the common version. But I believe most of the passages of this sort, that I objected to, will be mended."

## LETTER CLXI.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 16th March, 1783.

"I do not wonder that your Grace should be greatly affected with Lord Kaimes's kind remembrance in the hour of death. Friendship, that can stand such a test, must be very sincere indeed. But you have other friends, who are ca-

pable of all this, though perhaps it may not be in their power to show it. Recollection and composure are not granted to all in those awful moments. On his own account, his death is not to be regretted; but Mrs Drummond* is much to be pitied. No man ever enjoyed life more than he; and, when we consider how little time he passed in sleep, we cannot suppose his age to be less than one hundred and twenty. All his wishes, with respect to this world, were gratified; and there is no reason to think, that his life could have been prolonged without a prolongation of pain. I hope he employed a good hand to draw the picture. A good portrait of a dear friend is inestimable; but an indifferent one is a daily and an hourly grievance. As I wish to die satisfied with every body, it gives me great pleasure to think, that, before his death, he became satisfied with me; this, and many other good things, I owe to your Grace.

"I need not attempt to express what I feel, in consequence of that kind invitation which your

* The wife of Lord Kaimes. She assumed the name of Drummond, on succeeding to her family-estate, on the death of her nephew.

Grace and the Duke have honoured me with. I have been long accustomed to his Grace's goodness and your's in this particular; but I trust my gratitude is as lively as it was at the first. If my health would permit, and if I could get my family properly settled, nothing would hinder me from setting out for Gordon-Castle the first or second week of April."

## LETTER CLXII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HON. MR BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 30th March, 1783.

"I really do not know what to say, or what to think, of the times. They seem to exhibit scenes of confusion, which are too extensive for my poor head either to arrange or to comprehend. We had much need of peace; but I know not whether we have reason to rejoice in the peace we have made. Yet Lord Shelburne spoke plausibly for it; but Lord Loughborough was as plausible on the other side. When a controversy turns upon a fact, in regard to which the two contending parties are likely never to agree, a

decision is not to be expected; and people may continue to wrangle, and to make speeches, till death; like the president of the Robin-Hood, knock them down with his hammer, without coming one inch nearer the truth than they were at first. This seems to be the present case. If we were as much exhausted, and our enemies as powerful, as one party affirms, we had nothing for it but to surrender at discretion, and any peace was good enough for us: but if we were as little exhausted, and our enemies as little powerful as the other party says, we might have made a struggle or two more before we called out for mercy.

"To the present confusion in our councils I can foresee no end, till the rage of party subside, or till the executive power regain some part of that influence, which it has been gradually losing ever since I was capable of attending to public affairs. The encroachments that have lately been made on the power of the crown are so great, as to threaten, in my opinion, the subversion of the monarchy. Our government is too democratical; and what we want, in order to secure its permanence, is not more liberty, for we have too much, but the operation of a despotical principle,

to take place in cases of great public danger. If it had not been for this, the consular state of Rome would not have existed two hundred years. I hate despotism, and love liberty, as much as any man; but because medicine has sometimes killed as well as cured, I would not for that reason make a vow never to swallow a drug as long as I lived. The despotical principle I speak of, might be a little violent in its operation, like James's powders and laudanum; but if it could allay paroxysms and fevers in the body-politic, (which, by judicious management, it certainly might do,) it would be a valuable addition to the *materia medica* of government."

## LETTER CLXIII.

JOHN SCOTT TO DR BEATTIE.

Amwell, 29th August, 1783.

"I know not what apology to make, for not doing what ought to have been done many weeks ago. I can only say, what I am sure my friend will readily believe, that whatever were the causes of my so long delaying to answer his kind and

acceptable letter, want of regard for him was not among the number.

"I have read much of the 'Dissertations;'* and with much pleasure. I cannot wish any part of them suppressed, because I do not find them tedious. All, whom I have heard speak of them, have spoken highly of their merit; and I believe they will stand high in the opinion of all good judges. For my own part, I have read them with an almost uninterrupted correspondence of sentiment on every occasion. This was very far from being the case during my perusal of Dr Johnson's 'Lives;' I pursued his narrative with avidity, and sometimes profited by his remarks; but, in general, I found a forcible repulsion to his political and literary opinions, but more to the illiberal manner in which they are expressed. It is strange so good a writer, both in prose and verse, should be so ill a critic; and that a man, whose private character is so benevolent, should, as an author, indulge such contemptuous acrimony.

"Thy countryman, Dr Blair, has published a critical work; I have not read it, a few detached

* Dr Beattie's Dissertations, moral and critical, on Memory and Imagination, &c. published this year.

passages excepted, which I met with in the reviews, and as I gave the volumes a cursory inspection as they lay in a bookseller's shop. I saw enough of them, however, to determine me to purchase them, as soon as I have leisure for reading. At present I am much engaged with my own intended publication, which is in the press. I believe I mentioned the nature of this critical work of mine in a former letter. It will consist of a series of essays on several celebrated poems, by an investigation of whose beauties and defects I have exemplified the difference between good and bad composition.* My criterion of merit is classical simplicity; that is to say, the manner of Homer, the Greek tragic poets, Virgil, Milton, Pope, in contradistinction to every species of false ornament. There never was a time when it was more necessary to counteract the public taste, which is now running wild after this fashionable *clinquant*, as I think it is termed by Addison. The poems I have criticised are, Denham's 'Cooper's-Hill,' of which I have nothing to praise, and all to censure; Milton's 'Lycidas,' and Dyer's 'Ruins of Rome,' which I

* These Critical Essays were published in 1785.

have vindicated from the censure of Dr Johnson, and given the praise they merit; Pope's 'Windsor Forest,' Collins's 'Oriental Eclogues,' Gray's 'Elegy,' Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village,' and Thomson's 'Seasons;' in all which I have much to applaud, and something to blame.

"The Monthly Reviewers say, that criticism is fashionable; I hope then I shall have the luck to be for once in the fashion. I might often have been in fashion, but for a restive kind of disposition, that liked to write and print what pleased my own fancy, rather than what I had reason to think would please the readers of the day. I never could flatter the Bath-Easton establishment, nor be a candidate for their laureat sprig of myrtle; nor can I now praise the flimsy, flowery, inane productions of the Hayleyian school. I love good poetry, but I cannot admire bad, how much soever it may be the *ton* to admire it.

"My worthy friend, Mr Potter, in a letter I received from him some time ago, requested me to mention when I wrote, that he had ordered Dodsley to send thee a copy of his 'Observations on Gray,' with two or three proofs of the head, which I expect are before now safely arrived. I know, by experience, how difficult it is to get

a good likeness of any person in an engraving; I am sure mine, prefixed to my poems, is not a good one. Mr Hoole's, prefixed to his 'Ariosto,' is a very good one, and cost much less than mine. I did not know Gray, but somehow or other, from my own ideas of what such a man should have been, I am wholly of thy opinion, that Mason's print could not be quite like the original.

"As I seldom have leisure to keep copies of my letters, I am apt to forget, from time to time, what I have written; I do not now recollect, whether I mentioned in my former letter two recent publications, in the poetical way, of considerable merit. The one is called 'Aurelia, or the Contest,' a mock epic, in censure of the ladies for painting their faces, and other fashionable female foibles. This is written by the younger Hoole, son of the translator of 'Ariosto,' who published a pretty imitation of the 'Bath Guide,' entitled, 'Modern Manners.' He is a young man, and I think a rising genius; his last poem has not many faults, it is indeed rather too long. The other publication is called 'The Village,' a very classical composition, but also too long; and very unnecessarily, and I think absurdly, divided

into two books. It seems designed as a contrast to Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village,' in one point of view; that is, so far as Goldsmith expatiates on the felicities and innocencies of rural life. The author of 'The Village' takes the dark side of the question; he paints all with a *sombre* pencil; too justly perhaps, but to me, at least, unpleasingly. We know there is no unmixed happiness in any state of life, but one does not wish to be perpetually told so. The author of the above is a Mr Crabbe, who published a poem, called 'The Library,' about two years ago. I am told he was an apprentice to a surgeon in Suffolk, but, on the display of his poetical talents, met with friends, who advised him to take orders, and gave him a living. Literary merit, in this age, rarely meets such encouragement.

"I am sorry, my dear friend, to hear so ill an account of thy health. I hope the sea air and bathing may by this time have had their desired salutary effect. When health and leisure will permit, I shall hope to be favoured with a line. Thy correspondence is always highly acceptable."

## LETTER CLXIV.

DR BEATTIE TO THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

Peterhead, 18th September, 1783.

"Your Lordship's very kind letter, which I had the honour to receive about six weeks ago, demands my most grateful acknowledgments. I wished to have made them sooner, but was prevented by a tedious indisposition; from which, after long perseverance in the use of the sea-bath at this place, I am now recovered so far as to be able to attend a little to the duties of life.

"I know not how to thank your Lordship for honouring my book with a perusal; nor have I words to express the pleasure which your approbation of it has afforded me. Some professed critics have been pleased to find much fault with it, and with me; but your favourable opinion, my Lord, is more than a sufficient counterbalance to all they have done, or can do, and satisfies me, that my endeavours to do a little good, and give a little harmless amusement, have not been wholly unsuccessful. Indeed I have the happiness to find,

that most of those who approve my principles, are as friendly to this performance as I could desire.

"I have not yet met with Dr Blair's 'Lectures,' but I hear they have been very well received. With respect to his 'Sermons,' I am entirely of your opinion. Great merit they undoubtedly have; but I cannot discover in them that sublime simplicity of manner and style, which I have long thought essential to such compositions, and have seen so nobly exemplified in those of your Lordship.

"Whether it will be in my power to prepare any more of my papers for the press, I know not; but I shall keep the thing in view; and, if Providence grant me a moderate share of health and spirits, shall consider it as my indispensable duty, as far as I am able, to promote the love of truth, and to oppose the licentious doctrines that many authors of this age are labouring so industriously to establish. Though my last publication does not bear a controversial form, a great part of it was really intended, as your Lordship observes, "to correct some mistakes, and obviate "some abuses, of other writers."

"I would have availed myself, with the great-

est pleasure, of your Lordship's most obliging invitation to Worcestershire; but I am not yet so well as to undertake a journey, and the business of my profession will soon call me to Aberdeen, and confine me to the college. Next summer I hope I shall be in a condition to revisit England, and pay my respects to your Lordship once more."

## LETTER CLXV.

GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.* TO DR BEATTIE.

Margate, 13th October, 1783.

"I am highly flattered by your approbation of my explanation and version of 'Horace's Epistle,' and more especially by your exact coincidence of opinion concerning the drift and intention of the poet; whose purpose has long appeared to me so very obvious, that I have only wondered at its having been so strangely misconceived and mis-

* The translator of Horace's 'Art of Poetry,' of 'Terence' into familiar blank verse; and author of some excellent comedies, 'The Jealous Wife,' 'The Clandestine Marriage,' 'The English Merchant,' 'The Deuce is in Him,' and several others.

taken. Still, however, I was inclined to doubt and suspect the treacherous self-complacency of my own feelings, till I found my sentiments confirmed by men of learning and discernment like yourself. I ought, however, in some measure, to regret the having innocently deprived the world of your intended essay on the subject, though that very circumstance inspires me with the most agreeable confidence in the propriety of my own undertaking."

## LETTER CLXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 19th January, 1784.

"Your Grace will do me the justice to believe, that nothing in which you are interested can be indifferent to me. I am very much concerned to find, from the general strain of the letter, which I had the honour to receive a few days ago, that your present situation is not quite agreeable to you. You will no doubt be anxious and solitary; but nobody is so well prepared for solitude as you are. The resources you have in your

own mind, and the pleasure you take in superintending and instructing your charming young friends, will make the lonely hours glide imperceptibly away.

"I have got one companion for your Grace, and shall send him by the first opportunity. It is Hoole's translation of 'Ariosto,' which I have just received, and which your Grace commissioned me to order for you. It fills five large octavo volumes; the type very good and comfortable; the prints only so so. I know not how you will relish it; but I own it is rather too extravagant for me. Spenser is not less extravagant; but the harmony of his numbers, and the beauty and variety of his descriptions and of his language, intoxicate me into an utter forgetfulness of all the faults of his fable. Hoole is a smooth versifier; but he is rather a feeble one. His harmony is without variety; for he knows not how to adapt it to the subject; or rather his ear is not delicate in perceiving the effects that words may produce by their sound, as well as by their signification. This deficiency, however, is not peculiar to Hoole; he has it in common with Waller, Lansdowne, Roscommon, and several other poets of no inconsiderable name. I formerly attempted

to read 'Ariosto' in his own Italian; but found him tedious, and could not endure the incoherence of the fable. I have conversed with Italians, and read critics on the subject, but never could see the reason of that preference which his countrymen give him to the correct, the classical, the delightful Tasso."*

* On this question, regarding the respective poetical merits of Ariosto and Tasso, see Baretti's 'History of the Italian Tongue,' prefixed to his 'Italian Library.'† A friend has informed me, (for I have not been able to meet with the book in this country,) that the finest piece of criticism, any where to be met with, on this subject, is in a prose letter of Metastasio's, at the end of one of his two posthumous volumes. He concurs in opinion with Dr Beattie; and, with all due respect for the critical abilities of Mr Baretti, Metastasio must be allowed to be a great authority. This letter of Metastasio's, which is addressed to Ch. Sig. Don Dominico Diodati, a Neapolitan lawyer, is mentioned by Tiraboschi in his 'Storia della Poesia Italiana,'‡ an abstract of which has been lately published in London by Mr Mathias, to which those may refer who wish to see this controversy handled with much critical accuracy. Tiraboschi, in highly praising the various merits of those two great poets, finds the 'Gierusalemme' of Tasso, and the 'Orlando Furioso' of Ariosto, so totally different in their nature, design, and execution, as not to admit of being brought into comparison with each other. In various points, however, such as, fertility of invention, powerful description, and felicity of expression, his opinion seems rather to lean in favour of Ariosto.

† P. liii. ‡ Vol. III. part i. p. 254.

## LETTER CLXVII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 2d February, 1784.

"Mr Dilly having informed me, that a new edition is wanted of the 'Minstrel,' and the other little poems subjoined to it, I am now revising and correcting them for the last time. Will you permit me, Madam, to inscribe them to you? The inscription shall be short and simple; and, if you please, in the following terms:

*To*
MRS MONTAGU,
*These little Poems,*
*Now revised and corrected*
*For the last time,*
*Are,*
*With every Sentiment of*
*Esteem and Gratitude,*
*Most respectfully inscribed*
*By the* AUTHOR.

"I have another favour to ask, which is, that, as I have mentioned the name of our lamented friend, Dr Gregory, in the concluding stanza of

the second book of the 'Minstrel,' you will not forbid me to insert yours in the last stanza of the first. I had not the honour to be known to you when I published that first book; and, intending to put the name of a friend in the last stanza, but being then undetermined with respect to the person, I left in one of the lines a blank space, which has been continued in all the editions. That blank, with your permission, shall now be filled up; and then the stanza will run thus:

Here pause, my Gothic lyre, a little while;
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim:
But on this verse if Montagu should smile,
New lays ere long shall animate thy frame:
And her applause to me is more than fame,
For still with truth accords her taste refined.
At lucre or renown let others aim;
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom nature's charms inspire, and love of humankind.

"It would give me no little pleasure to see in the same poem the names of Mrs Montagu and Dr Gregory; two persons so dear to me, and who had so sincere a friendship for one another. Besides, Madam, I beg leave to put you in mind, that the first book of the poem was *published* at his desire, and the second at yours. So that I

have more reasons than one for making this request. When this affair is settled, and the volume revised once more, I bid adieu to poetry for ever. I wish I could say of my voice what Milton said of his; that it is

> ——————— Unchanged
> To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
> On evil days though fallen.——

But, alas! I am in the condition of Virgil's forlorn shepherd, to whom indeed it better becomes me to compare myself:

> *Omnia fert ætas, animum quoque. Sæpe ego longos*
> *Cantando puerum memini me condere soles.*
> *Nunc oblita mihi tot carmina: vox quoque Mœrim*
> *Jam fugit ipsa.——*

By the bye, I have a good mind to make this a motto to my little poetical volume."

## LETTER CLXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HON. MR BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 7th March, 1784.

"I ought to have acknowledged long ago the receipt of your most obliging favour of February 12th; but so many cross accidents have come in my way of late, that I had no time to settle to any thing. This has been a most dreary winter to me, and has, I believe, run away with several years of my life; but I will not at present trouble you with my lamentations.

"Let me rather congratulate you on the lengthening day, the dissolution of the frost, the approach of spring, and that hope of a long tract of good weather, which the late season of tempest may encourage us to entertain. The snow disappears apace; and all this day it has rained without intermission. You will now get on horseback, with Rhætus, Pholus, Hylæus, and the rest of your brethren; and Virgil's idea will again be realised:

——————*Vertice montis ab alto*
*Descendunt Centauri, Omolen, Othrymque* nivalem
*Linquentes cursu rapido: dat euntibus ingens*
*Sylva locum, et magno cedunt virgulta fragore:*

while we, two-legged and featherless animals, must be satisfied with the "*Secretum iter et fatales semitas vitæ.*"

"I wish I could also congratulate you on a political thaw, and the renovation of life and fluidity in our channels of public business: but there all circulation seems to be at an end. Surely we never expected to see such times as these. The constitution, I am afraid, will receive a shock; the precise nature of which, however, it is impossible to foresee. I admire the form of our government as much as any body; but I have long thought the democratical principle rather too predominant; and if it continue to gather strength, as it has done for these twenty years past, the independence of the two other branches of the legislature will be nothing but a name. Several of our ancient statesmen were of opinion, that England could never be ruined but by a parliament; and Montesquieu says, that this will happen, whenever the legislative power shall

become more corrupt than the executive. From the executive, at present, I think we have nothing to fear; and I am persuaded, that the majority of the nation is of the same opinion.

"I hope Lord Monboddo will live till his metaphysical quartos equal in number the nine Muses, and the books of his friend Herodotus. I am told he is angry at my last book, and says I know nothing of the origin of language. If that be the case, it must be in a great measure his fault, as well as my misfortune; for I have read all that he has published on that subject; and I have the same access to Lucretius that he had.

"With all the terrors of *singula de nobis anni prædantur* before my eyes, I have not been able to apply to any sort of study this winter. I had neither time nor tranquillity for such employment.

"The Principal's work * proceeds apace; and a great work it will be: the greatest indeed, at least the most important, of any I have ever seen in that way. I have read three-fourths of it with vast pleasure, and I hope no little benefit."

* Campbell's 'Translation of the Four Gospels.'

The two following letters of Cowper's were given me, when unpublished, by Mr Hayley, with permission to make any use of them I pleased. He has since printed them himself in the third volume of the 'Life of Cowper.' But such delicate, yet emphatic praise, of Dr Beattie, from such a writer as Cowper, is too grateful to me to be passed over here.

## LETTER CLXIX.

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ. TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN. *

5th April, 1784.

"I thanked you in my last for Johnson; I now thank you, with more emphasis, for Beattie,—the most agreeable and amiable writer I

* Hayley's 'Life of Cowper, Vol. III. p. 247.

ever met with; the only author I have seen, whose critical and philosophical researches are diversified and embellished by a poetical imagination, that makes even the driest subject and the leanest, a feast for an epicure in books. He is so much at his ease, too, that his own character appears in every page; and, which is very rare, we see not only the writer, but the man; and that man so gentle, so well-tempered, so happy in his religion, and so humane in his philosophy, that it is necessary to love him, if one has any sense of what is lovely. If you have not his poem, called 'The Minstrel,' and cannot borrow it, I must beg you to buy it for me; for, though I cannot afford to deal largely in so expensive a commodity as books, I must afford to purchase at least the poetical works of Beattie."

## LETTER CLXX.

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ. TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON. *

26th April, 1784.

"I have been lately employed in reading Beattie and Blair's 'Lectures.' The latter I have not yet finished. I find the former the most agreeable of the two; indeed the most entertaining writer upon dry subjects that I ever met with. His imagination is highly poetical, his language easy and elegant, and his manner so familiar, that we seem to be conversing with an old friend, on terms of the most social intercourse, while we read him. In Blair we find a scholar, in Beattie both a scholar and an amiable man; indeed so amiable, that I have wished for his acquaintance ever since I read his book."

* Hayley's 'Life of Cowper,' Vol. III. p. 253.

## LETTER CLXXI.

### DR BEATTIE TO MISS VALENTINE.

Edinburgh, 28th May, 1784.

" Many interesting matters have happened since I have been here; and if I had time, I could write a wondrous long letter of news. The election of Scotch Peers; the meeting of Parliament; the state of parties; the old and the new ministry; Pitt and Fox; the General Assembly— all these things are now forgotten; and nothing here is spoken or thought of but Mrs Siddons I have seen this wonderful person, not only on the stage, but in private company; for I passed two days with her at the Earl of Buchan's. Her powers in tragedy are beyond comparison great.

* Miss Margaret Valentine, daughter of Mr John Valentine, in Montrose, by Jean Beattie, sister of Dr Beattie, and now the wife of Mr Professor Glennie; || to whose affectionate care, during several years, while she had the superintendance of his family, Dr Beattie was so highly indebted, and which he so gratefully remembered in his will.

|| Vol. I. p. 40.

I thought my old friend Garrick fell little or nothing short of theatrical perfection; and I have seen him in his prime, and in his highest characters: but Garrick never affected me half so much as Mrs Siddons has done. Indeed the heart that she cannot subdue must be made of other materials than flesh and blood. In the 'Caledonian Mercury' you will see, from time to time, some critical observations on her action, which are very well written. The encomiums are high; but I assure you they are not above her merit. James, too, has seen her, and is transported. He never till now, he says, knew what acting was. It was very difficult to procure places; but by the kind attentions of the Duchess of Gordon, and Lord and Lady Buchan, I was nobly accommodated, and in the very best seats in the house. In private company, Mrs Siddons is a modest, unassuming, sensible woman; of the gentlest and most elegant manners. Her moral character is not only unblemished, but exemplary. She is above the middle size, and I suppose about thirty-four years of age. Her countenance is the most interesting that can be; and, excepting the Duchess of Gordon's, the most beautiful I have ever seen. Her eyes and eye-brows are of the

deepest black. She loves music, and is fond of the Scotch tunes; many of which I played to her on the violoncello. One of them ("She rose and let me in," which you know is a favourite of mine,) made the tears start from her eyes. "Go "on," said she to me, "and you will soon have "your revenge;" meaning, that I would draw as many tears from her as she had drawn from me. She sung "Queen Mary's Complaint" to admiration; and I had the honour to accompany her on the bass."

## LETTER CLXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

London, 1st July, 1784.

"Our friend Sir Joshua Reynolds is in perfect health and spirits. I dined with him the day after I came to town, and on Sunday last, when General Paoli, Dr Johnson, Mr Boswell, and several others were there. Sir Joshua's picture of Mrs Siddons is one of the greatest efforts of the pencil. He agrees with me, that she resembles Garrick in her countenance. Old Mr Sheridan,

who piques himself not a little on having been instrumental in bringing forward that incomparable actress, assured me the other day, that in every comic character, from Lady Townly to Nell the cobler's wife, she is as great and as original as in tragedy. I asked Tom Davies, (the author of 'Garrick's Life,') whether he could account for Garrick's neglect, or rather discouragement, of her. He imputed it to jealousy. "How is it "possible," said I, "that Garrick could be jealous "of a woman?" "He would have been jealous "of a child," answered he, "if that child had "been a favourite of the public: to my certain "knowledge he would." Johnson has got the better of his late illness; but has the look of decline. Wine, I think, would do him good, but he cannot be prevailed on to drink it. He has, however, a voracious appetite for food. I verily believe, that on Sunday last he ate as much to dinner, as I have done in all for these ten days past. I sat an hour with Johnson the other day, and he spoke of you with great kindness;* and

* Dr Johnson's acquaintance and mine first began when he came to Edinburgh in the year 1773, on his tour to the Hebrides. As he lived in the house of my friend Mr Boswell, with whom I was extremely intimate, I was very much with

sympathised with my situation, in a manner that did honour to his feelings."

## LETTER CLXXIII.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, 14th July, 1784.

"I am now, my dear Sir, arrived at a place, where external nature wears a face of the most profound tranquillity; and sit down to thank you for your two last letters, which came to hand the day before I left the town. It is so far fortunate, that Mrs B's removal to Musselburgh was attended with so little inconvenience. My confidence in your friendship and goodness entirely satisfies me, that you will soon put matters on a

Dr Johnson at that time; and ever after, when I had occasion to go to London, I uniformly experienced from him the utmost kindness and attention. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr Langton, Mr Boswell, Dr Beattie, being our common friends, formed a sort of bond of union between Dr Johnson and me; to which circumstance I attributed much of the notice with which he honoured me. It is unnecessary for me to say here how highly I respected the talents and the virtues of that truly eminent and good man.

right footing. I lament, indeed, that your attention to me and mine should give you so much trouble; but the consciousness of doing good to the unfortunate and forlorn will in part reward you; and no mind ever possessed that consciousness in a more exquisite degree than yours has reason to do.

"The hot weather made London so disagreeable, that I was obliged to leave it before I had seen all my friends: I must make a longer stay when I return thither. I wish I had time and capacity to give you a description of this parsonage. It is delightfully situated about half-way down a hill fronting the south, about a mile from Coxheath. My windows command a prospect, extending southward about twelve miles, and from east to west not less, I suppose, than forty. In this whole space I do not see a single speck of ground that is not in the highest degree cultivated; for Coxheath is not in sight. The lawns in the neighbourhood, the hop-grounds, the rich verdure of the trees, and their endless variety, form a scenery so picturesque and so luxuriant, that it is not easy to fancy any thing finer. Add to this, the cottages, churches, and villages rising here and there among the trees, and scattered

over the whole country; clumps of oaks, and other lofty trees, disposed in ten thousand different forms, and some of them visible in the horizon at the distance of more than ten miles; and you will have some idea of the beauty of Hunton. The only thing wanting is the murmur of running water; but we have some ponds and clear pools, that glitter through the trees, and have a very pleasing effect. With abundance of shade, we have no damp nor fenny ground; and though the country looks at a distance like one continued grove, the trees do not press upon us: indeed I do not at present see one that I could wish removed. There is no road within sight, the hedges that overhang the highways being very high; so that we see neither travellers nor carriages, and indeed hardly any thing in motion; which conveys such an idea of peace and quiet, as I think I never was conscious of before; and forms a most striking contrast with the endless noise and restless multitudes of Piccadilly.

"But what pleases me most at Hunton is not now in view; for my friend, the Bishop of Chester, is gone out a riding. You are no stranger to the character of this amiable man. Mrs Porteus is not less amiable. Their house is the mansion

of peace, piety, and cheerfulness. The Bishop has improved his parsonage and the grounds about it as much as they can be improved, and made it one of the pleasantest spots in England. The whole is bounded by a winding gravel-walk, about half-a-mile in circumference. Close by, lives a most agreeable lady, with whom we all breakfasted to-day. She is the widow of Sir Roger Twisden; and, though not more than five-and-twenty, lives in this elegant retirement, and employs herself chiefly in the education of her daughter, a fine child of four years of age, who is mistress of her catechism, and reads wonderfully well. I expect soon to see our friend Mr Langton, as the Bishop proposes to send him an invitation, Rochester being only ten miles off. Tunbridge-wells is fifteen miles the other way.

## LETTER CLXXIV.

### DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, 31st July, 1784.

"Your last letter having given me the fullest assurance, that the unfortunate object of our attention is now in circumstances as comfortable as her condition will admit of, I have been endeavouring to relieve my mind, for a time at least, from that load of anxiety which has so long oppressed it; and I already feel the happy consequences of this endeavour. My health is greatly improved; and, if this rheumatism would let me alone, I might almost say that I am quite well. Certain it is, that I have not been so well any time these four years. The tranquillity and beauty, the peace and the plenty, of this charming country, are a continual feast to my imagination; and I must be insensible, indeed, if the kindness, the cheerfulness, the piety, and the instructive conversation, of my excellent friend the Bishop of Chester and his amiable lady, did not powerfully operate in soothing my mind, and improving my

heart. Those people of fashion in the neighbourhood, who visit the Bishop, and are visited by him, are a small but select society, and eminently distinguished for their piety, politeness, literature, and hospitality. Among them, I have found some old friends, whom I formerly knew in London, and have acquired some new ones, on whom I set a very high value. Mr Langton and Lady Rothes have just left us, after a visit of two days. You will readily imagine with what regret we parted with them. Our friend Langton is continually improving in virtue, learning, and every other thing that is good. I always admired and loved him; but now I love and admire him more than ever.* We had much conversation about you. I have given the Bishop a full account of my family transactions, particularly for the last twelvemonth. He highly approves of every thing that has been done; bestows great commendations on my conduct; and has given me such advices as one would expect from his good sense and knowledge of the world. I have not yet fixed a day for my departure from this paradise; but I fear it must be in the course of next week.

* Vol. II. page 264.

My friends urge me to prolong my stay, and I am much disposed to do so; but I must now remember, that the year begins to decline, and I have several other visits to make, and things to do, before I leave England. Meanwhile, I shall, from time to time, let you know where I am, and what I am doing. Any letter you may favour me with, you will be pleased to put under the Bishop of Chester's cover.

"If I could give you an adequate idea of the way in which we pass our time at Hunton, I am sure you would be pleased with it. This is a rainy day, and I have nothing else to do at present: why, then, should I not make the trial?

"Our hour of breakfast is ten. Immediately before it, the Bishop calls his family together, prays with them, and gives them his blessing: the same thing is constantly done after supper, when we part for the night. In the intervals of breakfast, and in the evening, when there is no company, his Lordship sometimes reads to us in some entertaining book. After breakfast, we separate, and amuse ourselves, as we think proper, till four, the hour of dinner. At six, when the weather is fair, we either walk, or make a visit to some of the clergy or gentry in the neighbour-

hood, and return about eight. We then have music, in which I am sorry to say, that I am almost the only performer. I have got a violoncello, and play Scotch tunes, and perform Handel's, Jackson's, and other songs, as well as I can; and my audience is very willing to be pleased. The Bishop and Mrs Porteus are both fond of music. These musical parties are often honoured with the company of the accomplished and amiable Lady Twisden, of whom I gave you some account in my last. Observe, that there are in this part of Kent no fewer than three ladies of that name: but the one I speak of, is Lady Twisden of Jennings, in the parish of Hunton; who, in the course of one year, was a maid, a wife, a widow, and a mother; whose husband, Sir Roger, died about five years ago; and who, though possessed of beauty and a large fortune, and not more than twenty-five years of age, has ever since lived in this retirement, employing herself partly in study, but chiefly in acts of piety and beneficence, and in the education of her little daughter, who is indeed a very fine child. I have just now before me Miss Hannah More's 'Sacred Dramas,' which I borrowed from Lady Twisden, and in which I observe that she has

marked her favourite passages with a nicety of selection, that does great honour to her heart, as well as to her judgment. By the bye, Miss More* is an author of very considerable merit. My curiosity to see her works was excited by Johnson, who told me, with great solemnity, that she was "the most powerful versificatrix" in the English language.

"So much for our week-days. On Sundays,

* In a former part of these Memoirs,† some mention is made of the works of this amiable and excellent moralist, who still lives to instruct the world by her writings. It is a circumstance highly redounding to her praise, and well worthy of being recorded, that, besides those admirable publications, calculated for the meridian of the upper circles of life, she thought it no degradation of her talents to employ her pen in the service of the lower classes of the people; and at a period when the press in Britain was teeming with the most infamous productions, purposely calculated to diffuse the principles of infidelity and sedition, she employed herself in composing short and familiar tracts, in the form of Tales, Dialogues, Ballads, suited to the capacities of the lower orders of society, and designed as an antidote to the poisonous tendency of the others. Those useful little publications were printed in a cheap form, in order that they might be the more widely distributed by well-disposed persons; and, it is to be hoped, they were productive of the happiest effects. Mrs Hannah More's latest publication, is entitled, "Hints towards forming the Character of a young Princess."

† Vol. I, p. 272.

at eleven, we repair to church. It is a small, but neat building, with a pretty good ring of six bells. The congregation are a stout, well-featured set of people; clean and neat in their dress, and most exemplary in the decorum with which they perform the several parts of public worship. As we walk up the area to the Bishop's pew, they all make, on each side, a profound obeisance; and the same as we return. The prayers are very well read by Mr Hill, the curate, and the Bishop preaches. I need not tell you now, because I think I told you before, that Bishop Porteus is, in my opinion, the best preacher. in respect both of composition and of delivery, I have ever heard. In this capacity, indeed, he is universally admired, and many of the gentry come to hear him from the neighbouring parishes. After evening service, during the summer months, his Lordship generally delivers from his pew a catachetical lecture, addressed to the children, who, for this purpose, are drawn up in a line before him along the area of the church. In these lectures, he explains to them, in the simplest and clearest manner, yet with his usual elegance, the fundamental and essential principles of religion and morality; and concludes with an address to

the more advanced in years. This institution of the Bishop's I greatly admire. When children see themselves so much attended to, and so much pains taken in instructing them, they cannot fail to look upon religion as a matter of importance; and, if they do so, it is not possible for them, considering the advantages they enjoy, to be ignorant of it. The catachetical examinations in the church of Scotland, such of them at least as I have seen, are extremely ill calculated for doing good; being encumbered with metaphysical distinctions, and expressed in a technical language, which to children are utterly unintelligible, and but little understood even by the most sagacious of the common people. The Bishop told me, that he chose to deliver this lecture from his pew, and without putting on lawn sleeves, that it might make the stronger impression upon the children; having observed, he said, that what is delivered from the pulpit, and with the usual formalities, is too apt to be considered, both by the young and the old, as a thing of course. On Sunday evening, he sometimes reads to his servants a brief and plain abstract of the Scripture history, somewhat similar to that which was late-

ly published by Mrs Trimmer, and formerly by Lady Newhaven.

"In no other district of Great Britain, that I have seen, is there so little the appearance of poverty, and such indications of competence and satisfaction in the countenance and dress of the common people, as in this part of Kent. In this parish there is only one ale-house, the profits whereof are inconsiderable. The people are fond of cricket-matches, at which there is a great concourse of men, women, and children, with good store of ale and beer, cakes, ginger-bread, &c. One of these was solemnized a few nights ago in a field adjacent to the parish-church. It broke up about sun-set, with much merriment, but without drunkenness or riot. The contest was between the men of Hunton and the men of Peckham; and the latter were victorious."

## LETTER CLXXV.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Hunton, near Maidstone, Kent, 6th August, 1784.

"Your remarks on Mrs B.'s condition are equally striking and just; she is certainly not unhappy. And your observation, "That the days of "human life, that are passed without sorrow and "without sin, are neither to be lamented when "passing, nor regretted when passed," has suggested to me several comfortable reflections. I should indeed be equally insensible, both to moral and intellectual excellence, and to the picturesque beauties of nature, if the charming scenes, and the delightful society, in which I have passed these three weeks, had not soothed my mind into a sweet forgetfulness of care, and encouraged me to hope, that I am not in so forlorn a condition as I lately imagined.*

"The very countenances and behaviour of the common people of this district have had their ef-

* This alludes to some family-distresses to which he had been subjected.

fect in composing my mind and raising my spirits. I left a country, which is at all times barren and dreary, and which, when I left it, had not got the better of a two years scarcity, I had almost said, famine. The peace and the plenty of this region form the most striking contrast imaginable. Here, the people are stout, and hearty, and active; their apparel is neat and decent; and their honest countenances are strongly expressive of content and competence. When Virgil says of his happy husbandmen, that they suffer no pain, either from pitying the poor, or from envying the rich, I am now satisfied, that he had no idea of either blaming or praising their Stoical apathy; his meaning certainly was, that the rich cannot be envied where all have enough, and that the poor cannot be pitied where poverty is unknown."

## LETTER CLXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Sandleford, near Newbury, Berks, 18th August, 1784.

"It is but a week since I exchanged the paradise of Hunton for the purgatory of London;

and it seems almost a year: so much, during that short period, have I suffered from heat, and bustle, and bad air, and (what is worst of all) from sorrow of heart at parting with the best of friends. The month which I passed at Hunton was the happiest of my life; and I dare not flatter myself with the hope of such another. But I shall, as long as I live, derive satisfaction from recalling the persons, the conversations, and the scenery, of it; which now occupy so large a space (if I may so express myself) in my imagination, that there is hardly room for the intrusion of any other idea.

"On Saturday and Sunday I was so overpowered by the intolerable heat of the town, that on Monday I was glad to make my escape a second time into the country. I passed the night at Reading, and yesterday at three o'clock arrived here; where I found Mrs Montagu and her nephew in perfect health, and very anxious in their inquiries after the health of Mrs Porteus and your Lordship. I had not been here five minutes, when the wind on a sudden shifted, with a violent squall, to the north-east, and the weather in an instant changed from very hot to very cold, as it still continues to be.

"This place is much improved since I saw it last. A great deal of brick-building and garden-wall is cleared away, and the lawn is opening very fast on every side. A little rivulet, that used to wander, unheard and unseen, through a venerable grove of oaks, is now collected into two large and beautiful pieces of water, round which the walks and grounds are laid out to very great advantage indeed. The situation is on an eminence, with a gentle slope of a quarter of a mile towards the south; and from every part of the lawn there is a beautiful prospect, first of a romantic village, called Newtown, and beyond that of the Hampshire hills, some of which are tufted with wood, and others bare, and green, and smooth, to the top.

"At the distance of about thirty yards from the house of Sandleford, stood formerly an old chapel, (for the place was once a priory,) which, for a century past, or more, had been neglected, or used as a place for lumber. This, Mrs Montagu has transformed into a very magnificent room, and joined to the main body of the house by a colonnade; which, expanding in the middle, and rising to the height of thirty feet at least,

forms a noble drawing-room of an elliptical shape. When the doors of these rooms are thrown open, the walk, from end to end, is upwards of an hundred feet, and the heighth and breadth proportionable. The dining-room terminates in a very large window in the Gothic style, reaching from the floor almost to the roof, and looking into a grove of tall oaks, which, with a happy and very peculiar effect, retire from the eye in four rows, and give to this spacious apartment the appearance of a vast arbour. From this account, if I have done any justice to my idea, you will conclude, and justly too, that there is some little resemblance between this room and the new room at Hunton."

## LETTER CLXXVII.

### DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Edinburgh, 18th September, 1784.

"I cannot express my regret at being obliged to leave so soon the charming society at Sandleford; a society in which I had so many opportu-

nities of improving both my understanding and my heart; and in which I must have been callous indeed, if I had not been every moment conscious of the most delightful emotions that admiration and gratitude can inspire. I beg to be remembered, in the most affectionate terms, to your amiable and accomplished nephew, whom I found to be just what I wished, and what I expected. He is as good as I wish him to be, and I hope he will always be as happy.

"My journey was very pleasant. The weather was uncommonly fine; and the gay harvest scenes, that everywhere surrounded me, conveyed such ideas of vivacity and gladness, as could not fail to have the happiest effects on my health and spirits: and I was surprisingly recovered before I got to Temple-Newsam,* in Yorkshire, where I passed ten days very agreeably. I then resumed my journey, and arrived here the day before yesterday. Most of my friends being gone to the country, I can have no temptation to remain long in Edinburgh, and am just on the eve of my departure for Aberdeen and Peterhead; from which

* The seat of Lady Viscountess Irvine.

last place I shall have the honour to write to you, as soon as I have had a conversation with Mrs Arbuthnot. I am impatient to see her, and to "make the widow's heart sing for joy," in the contemplation of your goodness."

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In order the better to understand the following anecdote, which does equal credit to Dr Beattie and to Mrs Montagu, it is proper to mention, that the worthy woman, to whom Mrs Montagu thus extended her beneficence, was a Mrs Arbuthnot, whose maiden name was Anne Hepburn, daughter of the Reverend Mr Alexander Hepburn, a minister of the episcopal church of Scotland, who had been domestic chaplain in the family of the Earl Marischal of Scotland, and preceptor to his sons, the late Earl Marischal and General Keith. She inherited from nature no inconsiderable portion of genius, and had enjoyed the benefit of a literary education. Her reading, however, had unfortunately taken a turn very unusual with the female sex; and she had imbibed

a partiality for the sceptical philosophy; but of which she became completely cured, by the subsequent perusal of books of a better tendency, particularly Butler's 'Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion,' which she justly considered as a work of pre-eminent merit, and which continued to be her favourite study, next to the Scriptures, to her dying hour.

She was married in the year 1737, when twenty-eight, to Captain Andrew Arbuthnot; a name of which there were at that time several families in Peterhead, of the same kindred, distinguished for their great integrity and simplicity of manners. The celebrated Dr Arbuthnot was a branch of the family. Her husband was master of a vessel that traded from Peterhead to America; and, during one of his voyages, died of a fever at Charlestown, in South Carolina, in the year 1740. To add to this calamity, while the mate, who brought home the vessel to Peterhead, had come on shore, to communicate to her the melancholy tidings of her husband's death, by some accident the vessel was wrecked in the bay, and in her the whole of the captain's property was lost. Thus, in one hour, she found herself deprived of

an affectionate husband, and left totally destitute, with the charge of a boy, a child of a year old.

After this dire calamity, Mrs Arbuthnot struggled hard to maintain herself and her son by her labour, and the kindness of her friends, who contrived to assist her in a concealed manner, so as not to hurt the delicacy of her feelings; and she has frequently been heard to say, she sometimes received aid as if it had dropt from heaven, without her knowing from what hand it came.

To fill up the measure of her misfortune, her only son, whom she had used every effort to educate, by means of a small bursary at the University of Aberdeen,* and who, by the interest of some of his father's relations, had obtained a commission in the army, in which he served with reputation; died at an early age in the West Indies, at a period when he had the prospect of future promotion, by which he might have been enabled to contribute to his mother's more comfortable subsistence. Thus bereft of every consolation, except what she derived from religion, and the soothing tenderness of her friends, she continued

* See Vol. I. p. 20.

contentedly to strive with virtuous poverty during the whole course of her long widowhood.

While Mrs Arbuthnot had resided for a short time at Aberdeen, during the period of her son's education, she had become known to the late Dr John Gregory, to Dr Beattie, and several of the eminent literary characters of that time, who esteemed her for her taste in books, and respected her by reason of her virtues and exemplary piety. Dr Beattie, in particular, contracted an intimate friendship with Mrs Arbuthnot, with whom he constantly lodged during his annual visits to Peterhead. In her house he enjoyed tranquillity and perfect freedom; and, when he was disposed for conversation, he had always the benefit of Mrs Arbuthnot's, whose cultivated understanding, and pious frame of mind, were exactly suited to his taste. To her opinion he generally submitted his literary productions before their publication; and he used to say, that he had seldom found her mistaken in her judgment of their merit. On representing her situation to Mrs Montagu, that lady was pleased to settle on her an annuity, which raised this poor, but grateful woman, from her contented poverty, to a state of comparative affluence. Mrs Arbuthnot died

19th May, 1795, at the very advanced age of eighty-six.

## LETTER CLXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Peterhead, 11th October, 1784.

"I arrived at Peterhead the first of October. I went instantly to Mrs Arbuthnot, whom I found in tolerable health, sitting solitary by her little fire, and amusing herself, as usual, with a book and her work; both of which she has the art of attending to at the same time. She was the more pleased to see me, as my arrival was unexpected; for she had not heard that I was returned to Scotland. After she had asked all the customary questions, I told her, without betraying any emotion, or seeming to have any thing in view but her amusement, that if she was at leisure, I would tell her a story. I accordingly began; and, agreeably to the commission with which you honoured me, made a very long and circumstantial story of it, recapitulating, as far as my memory would enable me, every thing that

passed in that conversation at Sandleford, of which she and her aunt, Mrs Cockburn,* were the subject. I saw she was greatly affected with the idea of your thinking so favourably of her aunt, and with your condescension in inquiring so minutely into her own story and character; but I did not throw out a single hint that could lead her to anticipate what was to follow. At last, when I found that her heart was thoroughly warmed, and recollected your observation, that the human heart in that state becomes malleable, I hastened to the conclusion, which I expressed in the simplest and fewest words possible; so that the whole struck her at one and the same instant. She attempted an exclamation, but it was inarticulate, and almost resembled a scream; the tears ran down her furrowed cheeks; and she could only say, "O dear, I cannot speak one "word!" and seemed almost exhausted with the effort that had produced that short sentence. I desired her not to attempt to speak, but to hear me a little further; and then told her, Madam,

* A lady of considerable genius and learning, widow of the Reverend Mr Cockburn, one of the ministers of the episcopal chapel at Aberdeen, of whose writings two volumes were published, many years ago, now almost entirely forgotten.

that such acts of beneficence were familiar things to you;* and mentioned some instances that had come to my knowledge, particularly that of Mrs Williams. She held up her eyes and hands, sometimes in silent adoration of Providence, and sometimes with the most passionate expressions of gratitude to her noble benefactress. In a word, Madam, she accepted your bounty in a way that did honour both to her understanding and to her feelings; and I left her to compose herself by

* On this subject of Mrs Montagu's charitable distributions, it were injustice to her to omit inserting the following paragraph of a letter of her's to Dr Beattie, now lying before me. It alludes to the person mentioned in a letter of Dr Beattie's to her, p. 113.

"The Duchess-dowager of Beaufort gave me a guinea for the "little man with the great soul, whom the vulgar at Aberdeen "call a dwarf: be so good as to give him a guinea, and charge "it to my account; and if at any time he is sick or distressed, "remember that one, who is weary of seeing little minds in "great men, will gladly relieve one where this unseemly cir-"cumstance is nobly reversed. Consider me always in the best "light in which you can put me, as the banker of the distress-"ed; and at any time call on me for such objects; and, in all "senses of the word, *I will honour your bill.* Vulgar wretched-"ness one relieves, because it is one's duty to do so; and one "has a certain degree of pleasure in it: but to assist merit in "distress, is an Epicurean feast; and indulge this luxury of "taste in me, when any remarkable object shall offer itself to "your acquaintance."

silent meditation. Indeed I made haste to get away after I had executed my commission; for the scene was so delightfully affecting, that I could stand it no longer.

"When the news was known next day in the town, it diffused a very general joy; and many an honest heart invoked the blessing of heaven upon your head: for Mrs Arbuthnot's character is exceedingly respected by all who know her; and her narrow circumstances have long been matter of general regret; as the delicacy of her mind was well known, which no doubt discouraged some persons from making a direct offer of their services, though indirectly, I believe, that some little matters have been done for her benefit. Yet, since her husband's death, which happened four-and-forty years ago, I know not whether she was at any time worth ten pounds a-year. With this small appointment she has constantly maintained the appearance of a gentlewoman, and has received the visits of the best people in the town and neighbourhood, whom she was always happy to entertain with a dish of tea: and among her visitors can reckon the (present) Duchess of Gordon, the Countess of Errol, Lord Saltoun's family, Sir William Forbes, and

many others of the best fashion. What is yet more strange, with this small appointment, she has always found means to be charitable to the poor; and when I have seen her dealing out her alms, which was commonly a handful of oatmeal to each person, I know not how often she has put me in mind of the widow in the Gospel.

"There are several persons of her name in this town; and therefore it may be proper to inform you, that her distinguishing name is Mrs Andrew Arbuthnot. The name Arbuthnot is frequent in the neighbourhood. The great Dr John Arbuthnot, so eminent for his virtue, his learning, and his wit, was the grandson of a gentleman-farmer, who lived at a place called Scots-mill, three miles from this town; and Dr Arbuthnot and Captain Andrew Arbuthnot were second-cousins.

"I am afraid Mrs Arbuthnot will not long stand in need of your bounty; for she is seventy-six years of age, and suffers much from a cough and asthma. I was introduced to her about twenty years ago, by her nephew, Mr Arbuthnot of Edinburgh, and have since been as attentive to her as I could; of which she is so sensible, that sometimes, in the extravagance of her gratitude, she has called me *her good genius*. She

actually gave me that appellation in the first draught of that letter which she wrote to you about a week ago, and which I hope, Madam, you have received; but I prevailed with her to change the phrase.

"Since I came hither I have been seven or eight times in the sea; and I think I am already the better for it. Only, for three or four hours after every plunge, I am a little disconcerted by a confusion in the head, and a tremor in the hands; of which I am afraid you will see too many proofs in this letter: but that symptom will probably disappear, when I am a little more accustomed to salt-water. I shall remain here a fortnight longer; and then the business of the college will fix me in Aberdeen for the winter.

"Permit me now, Madam, to thank you for your most obliging letter of the 20th of September, which, after wandering long from place to place, has overtaken me at last. The harvest-scenes, which interest you so much, were also very interesting to me in the course of my journey through England; for the weather was the finest that could be, and every scythe and sickle, and the waggons, and the gleaners, were all in motion. With peculiar satisfaction I took no-

tice of that laudable English custom, of permitting the poor and the infirm to glean the fields.

"How shall I thank you, Madam, and my amiable friend, Mr Montagu, for the kind invitation you gave my son and me to pass some part of the ensuing spring at Sandleford! Be assured, it will be a grievous disappointment to us both, if we cannot get that matter accomplished. If my domestic affairs continue quiet, as I thank God they are at present, I hope we shall find no difficulty in it."

## LETTER CLXXIX.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Peterhead, 17th October, 1784.

"It flatters me very much to hear, that I am just now in favour with Lord Monboddo; for I lately heard a very different account. I am likewise happy to understand, from his comparing your Grace to Helen of Troy, that there is at least one *Modern* to whom he is willing to do justice: for, in that comparison, he certainly *intends* a very great compliment, though I cannot

think there *is* a great one. I hope he will no longer insist on it, that Helen was seven feet high; and that he will devise some expedient, to vindicate that lady's character from the aspersion of having been at least fourscore when Paris ran away with her: a paradox, which, for the honour of my friend Homer, I wish I were able to confute; though I cannot think of any other way of doing it, than by supposing, that there were two fair ladies of that name, one of whom came to Troy, and the other eloped with Theseus about sixty years before."

## LETTER CLXXX.

### DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 31st January, 1785.

"The sea-bath was of considerable service to me; and as this has been the most quiet winter I have passed these seven years, I am rather in better health than usual, and have of late been making some progress in a little work, of which you saw a sketch at Sandleford, and which you did me the honour to read and approve of. It

was your approbation, and that of the Bishop of Chester and Sir William Forbes, that determined me to revise, correct, and enlarge it, with a view to publication. When finished, it will make two little volumes, of the size of Mr Jenyns's book on the 'Internal Evidence of Christianity.' My plan is more comprehensive than his, and takes in the external evidence of miracles and prophecy, as well as the internal. That you may see, Madam, somewhat more distinctly what I intend, I beg leave to transcribe the following paragraph from my introduction:

"I have met with little practical treatises, "called, *Ten minutes advice*—to those who are "about to engage in such or such an enterprize. "These performances may have their use, though "they do not contain a full detail of the business "alluded to. I mean to give *Two hours advice* "—to that person, who may be in danger from "the books, or from the company, of infidels, "and who is candid enough to desire to be in- "formed, in few words, whether the evidence "on the other side be so plausible, as to deserve "the notice of a rational mind. If I shall sa- "tisfy him that it is, he will naturally lay me "aside, and have recourse, for farther informa-

"tion, to those great authors, who have gone "through the whole subject, and *illustrated* and "*proved* many things, which the narrowness of "my plan permits me only to *affirm*, or perhaps "only to *hint at*. And (which is far the most "important part of the whole procedure) he will "at the same time reverently consult those sa-"cred oracles, which contain the history of di-"vine revelation; and which he will find more "frequently, perhaps, and more fully, than he is "aware of, to carry their own evidence along "with them. And when he has done all this, "in the spirit of candour, with an humble and "docile mind, and with a sincere desire to know "the truth and his duty, I may venture to assure "him, that he will not regret the time he has "employed in the study; and that, from the "writings or conversation of unbelievers, his "faith will never be in danger any more."

"Your sentiments of Dr Arbuthnot agree entirely with mine. He had, I think, more wit and humour, and he certainly had much more virtue and learning, than either Pope or Swift. The eloquence and ostentation of Bolingbroke could never impose on Arbuthnot: he told his son, (whom I once had the honour to converse

with at Richmond) that he knew Bolingbroke was an infidel, and a worthless vain man. The Doctor was the son of a clergyman of this country; and was educated at the Marischal College. His grandfather lived at a place called Scotsmill, in a romantic situation on the brink of a river, about three miles from Peterhead; a place which I often visit as classic ground, as being probably the place where the Doctor, when a school-boy, might often pass his holidays. I am informed, that the late Dr Hunter bequeathed an original picture of Arbuthnot to that university; at which it should appear that he had been educated. If this be true, it is the property of the Marischal College. If I knew any thing of Dr Hunter's executors, I would write to them on the subject; as the picture has never appeared."

## LETTER CLXXXI.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 7th February, 1785.

"The quiet which I have enjoyed this winter, especially since I received your letter, has not only given me better health than usual, but has also left my mind at leisure to resume that little work on the 'Evidence of Christianity,' of which you saw a sketch last summer. All the introductory part is now written, and the part you saw is extended to double its former size. One entire section is added on the evidence arising from prophecy; and, in evincing the usefulness of revelation, I have had occasion to make some additional remarks on the insufficiency of the ancient philosophy, and the characters of the philosophers. Whether this work shall ever be of use to others, I know not; but this I know, that it has been of considerable benefit to myself. For though, when I entered upon it, I understood my subject well enough to entertain no doubt of the goodness of my cause, yet I find, as

I advance, new light continually breaking in upon me.

"My list of Scotticisms is also very much enlarged. I believe I shall print it here for the convenience of correcting the press, which, in the present state of the post-office, cannot be done by a person at a distance. If you see Mr Creech, please to ask what number of copies I shall send to him. It will be a pretty large pamphlet, and the price shall not exceed a shilling.

"Dr Campbell's preliminary dissertations are all finished: they alone will make a large quarto. I have read them all with great pleasure. They are a treasury of theological learning; and written with a degree of candour, as well as precision, of which, in matters of this kind, the world has seen very few examples."

## LETTER CLXXXII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE REV. DR LAING.

Aberdeen, 13th February, 1785.

"You may believe, that your accounts of Mrs Arbuthnot's recovery, so far exceeding what I expected, gave me the greatest pleasure. I see now, she will soon be what she was before; which I heartily pray may be the case. I was rather in low spirits about her, when I wrote last to Mrs Montagu.

"In that lady's last letter to me, dated 21st November, there are some sentences, which I shall set down here, as I know they will give Mrs Arbuthnot pleasure.

"My mind is so much engaged by Mrs Ar-
"buthnot, I cannot think of any thing else.
"Sometimes I think I am wicked, in not being
"thankful enough, that I am at last admitted to
"her friendship. I fret and repine, that I had not
"that happiness many years sooner. Alas! what
"presumption is it in me to repine at this! As
"if I deserved the heartfelt-delight of being in

"any degree serviceable to one of the best of "human beings. What pleasure should I have "had in her correspondence! While I read your "account of her noble and delicate manner of "receiving the friendship of one, who had a high "veneration for her and her aunt, I *lived along* "*the line*, and every word excited a sensation. "I am pleased to find, that by her husband she "is so nearly allied to my first favourite of all "the *beaux esprits*, Dr Arbuthnot. He had none "of the peevish jealousies of Mr Pope, nor the "harshness and pride of Dr Swift. Conscious "of more noble endowments, he was not anxious "to obtain the character of a wit. There is such "ease, and so natural an air in his writings, as "prove him to have been witty without effort or "contrivance. I have heard my old friend, Lord "Bath, speak of him with great affection, as a "most worthy and amiable man, and as a com- "panion more pleasant and entertaining than ei- "ther Pope or Swift. When I find much to admire "in an author, I always wish to hear he has qua- "lities for which I may esteem and love him; and "I have listened with great pleasure to Lord Bath's "and the late Lady Hervey's praises of Dr Ar- "buthnot. With what delight must our friend at

" Peterhead read the works of so amiable a rela-
" tion! But the only real and sincere happiness
" which remains for her"——

" What follows is a compliment to me, which, as I do not at all deserve, I shall not transcribe.

" In my answer you will suppose that I did not fail to express my approbation of her sentiments of Dr Arbuthnot, which coincide exactly with my own. I have told her of Scots-mill, and of my making pilgrimages to it as classic ground; and I have told her every thing I know of Dr Arbuthnot's history, so far as relates to this country. I believe, however, I omitted to tell her, that he and I are of the same county, and that I had the honour to be born within four miles of the place of his birth."

## LETTER CLXXXIII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE HON. MR BARON GORDON.

Aberdeen, 28th February, 1785.

" The Duchess of Gordon must, I think, have been mistaken, when she wrote to me some time ago that I was then in favour with Lord Mon-

boddo. He never has pardoned me for calling Captain Cook a philosopher; and I am afraid never will. Besides, I think he did not use me quite well in the preface to his 'Metaphysic;' and when a man uses you ill, he seldom fails to hate you for it. However, I have not retorted. In my last book, when I combat his opinions, I seldom mention his name, and I never mention him without paying him a compliment. The third volume of 'Metaphysic' I have not seen; but Principal Campbell gave me the other day such an account of it, as satisfies me, that it must be the most extraordinary performance that ever was written, and that he is determined to believe every thing that is incredible. I wonder whether he has ever read 'The Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor.'* His hatred of Johnson was singular; he would not allow him to know any thing but Latin grammar, *and that,* says he, *I know as well as he does.* I never heard Johnson say any thing severe of him; though, when he mentioned his name, he generally

"Grinned horribly a ghastly smile."

Johnson was a good man, and did much good;

* In the 'Arabian Nights Entertainment.'

and every one who knew him, or his works, must allow that he possessed extraordinary abilities. I long to see Mr Boswell's 'Johnsoniana.'

## LETTER CLXXXIV.

### DR BEATTIE TO DR PORTEUS, BISHOP OF CHESTER.

Aberdeen, 21st October, 1785.

"I read lately Sheridan's 'Life of Swift.' It is panegyric from beginning to end. Swift had many good as well as great qualities; but his character was surely, upon the whole, very exceptionable. Mr Sheridan, however, will not admit that he had any fault. Even his brutality to Stella on her death-bed, which undoubtedly hastened her dissolution, his biographer endeavours to apologise for; and he has a great deal of very unsatisfactory reasoning on the subject of the *Yahoos*. The question is not, whether *that* man is not a very odious animal, who finds his own likeness in those filthy beings; but whether Swift did not intend his account of them as a satire on human nature, and an oblique censure of Providence itself in the formation of the human

body and soul. That this was Swift's meaning, is to me as evident, as that he wrote the book: and yet I do not find my own likeness in the *Yahoos:* I only know, for I think I could prove, that Swift wished it to be understood, as his opinion, that the human species and the *Yahoo* are equally detestable. Mr Sheridan, too, is not, I think, over-candid in what he says of Lord Orrery; whose book, though not free from faults, contains some good criticism, and shows no little tenderness for the character of his hero.

"I long to see Dr Johnson's 'Prayers and Meditations,' and Mr Boswell's 'Journey to the Hebrides;' but it will be a great while before they find their way to this remote corner.

"Has your Lordship read Dr Reid's 'Essays on the Intellectual Faculties of Man?' Those readers, who have been conversant in the modern philosophy of the mind, as it appears in the writings of Des Cartes, Malebranché, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, will be much entertained with this work, which does great honour to the sagacity and patience of the author. It contains the principles of his former book laid down on a larger scale, and applied to a greater variety of subjects. Ever since Plato, or rather Pythagoras

took it into his head, that the soul perceives only what is contiguous to, or inclosed in, its own substance, and consequently perceives not outward things themselves, but only ideas of them, this ideal system has been increasing in bulk and absurdity; and it is astonishing to see, that so many men of parts could be the dupes of it. All this rubbish is now cleared away, and a happy riddance it is. Dr Reid treats his opponents, and their tenets, with a respect and a solemnity, that sometimes tempt me to smile. His style is clear and simple; and his aversion to the word *idea* so great, that I think he never once uses it in delivering his own opinions. That little word has indeed been a source of much perplexity to metaphysicians; but it is easy to use it without ambiguity; and it has now established itself in the language so effectually, that we cannot well do without it. It was not without reason, that the learned Stillingfleet took the alarm at Locke's indiscreet use of that word. It was indeed an *ignis fatuus* to poor Mr Locke, and decoyed him, in spite of his excellent understanding, into a thousand pits and quagmires. Berkeley it bewildered still more; and it reduced David Hume to the

condition of a certain old gentleman, of whom we read, that,

——————"Fluttering his pinions vain,
"Plumb down he dropped ten thousand fathom deep."

## LETTER CLXXXV.

### DR BEATTIE TO MRS MONTAGU.

Aberdeen, 15th November, 1785.

"Please to accept, Madam, of my best thanks for the elegant copy of the last edition of your work, which was forwarded to me by Mr Dilly. I am glad to see you have now claimed the property of the three beautiful Dialogues; but it gives me concern to observe, that you have paid too much attention to my foolish remarks.

"The death of the Duchess-dowager of Portland * affected me most sensibly. I was no stranger to her virtues; I was under great obligations to them; and, from the tranquillity of her life, the cheerfulness of her temper, and the amusing nature of her favourite studies, I had flattered

* Vol. I. p. 335.

myself, that great ornament of her sex and country would live many years. Poor Mrs Delany!* I pitied her from my soul; but had I known all the truth, I should have been much more in pain for her. Having heard that she brought Dr Delany ten thousand pounds, which was a great fortune sixty years ago, I presumed that her circumstances were at least independent, if not opulent. I must blame her extraordinary request of being omitted in the Duchess's will; and I wonder her Grace would comply with it. What a charming account you give me of their Majesties' generosity to Mrs Delany!† There was more in it than generosity: there was an affectionate sympathy, and a goodness and tenderness of heart, which does them more honour than even that high station, to which their pre-eminence in virtue, as well as the laws of their country, gives them so just a title. When the rage of party subsides, and misrepresentations are forgotten, how great, and how amiable, will those distinguished characters appear!

"Among the many curiosities which the Duchess of Portland had collected, there was a vo-

* Vol. I. p. 364. † Ibid.

lume, which you have no doubt seen, containing some prose-treatises in manuscript of the poet Prior. Her Grace was so good as to permit me to read them, and I read them with great pleasure. One of them, a dialogue between Locke and Montaigne, is an admirable piece of ridicule on the subject of Locke's philosophy; and seemed to me, when I read it, to be, in wit and humour, not inferior even to the 'Alma' itself. I took the liberty to say to the Duchess, that it was pity they were not given to the world; but I found her rather averse to the publication. She said, she could not bear to see her old friend criticised and censured by such people as the Critical Reviewers, &c. I hope the work will no longer be suppressed.

"Mr Boswell has published what I am informed is an extraordinary book, of the 'Sayings of Dr Johnson.' Johnson, no doubt, said many good things: but his want of temper, and violent prejudices, often divested him of his candour, and made him say what was not only improper, but in a very high degree censurable. I hope Mr Boswell has made the due distinction between what deserves to be known, and what ought to be forgotten."

The following letter from Dr Beattie to Mr Arbuthnot, gives, I think, a very just criticism on Mr Boswell's 'Tour to the Hebrides.'

## LETTER CLXXXVI.

DR BEATTIE TO ROBERT ARBUTHNOT, ESQ.

Aberdeen, 26th November, 1785.

"Mr Boswell's book is arrived at last, and I have just gone through it. He is very good to me, as Dr Johnson always was; and I am very grateful to both. But I cannot approve the plan of such a work. To publish a man's letters, or his conversation, without his consent, is not, in my opinion, quite fair: for how many things, in the hour of relaxation, or in friendly correspondence, does a man throw out, which he would never wish to hear of again; and what a restraint would it be on all social intercourse, if one were to suppose that every word one utters would be entered in a register! Mr Boswell indeed says,

that there are few men who need be under any apprehension of that sort. This is true; and the argument he founds on it would be good, if he had published nothing but what Dr Johnson and he said and did: for Johnson, it seems, knew, that the publication would be made, and did not object to it; but Mr B. has published the sayings and doings of other people, who never consented to any such thing; and who little thought, when they were doing their best to entertain and amuse the two travellers, that a story would be made of it, and laid before the public. I approve of the Greek proverb, that says, "I hate a bottle-"companion with a memory." If my friend, after eating a bit of mutton with me, should go to the coffee-house, and there give an account of every thing that had passed, I believe I should not take it well.

"Of Dr Johnson himself, as well as of others, many things are told which ought to have been suppressed; such, I mean, as are not in any respect remarkable, and such as seem to betray rather infirmity or captiousness, than genius or virtue. Johnson said of 'The Man of the World,' that he found little or nothing in it. Why should this be recorded? Is there any wit in it; or is it

likely to be of any use? The greatest dunce on earth is capable of saying as *good* a thing. Of a very promising young gentleman, to whom Dr Johnson was under the highest obligations, (for he had risqued his life in Johnson's service,) and who, to the great grief of all who knew him, unfortunately perished at sea about ten years ago, Dr Johnson said, that it was pity he was not more intellectual. Why should this be recorded? I will allow, that one friend might, without blame, say this to another in confidence; but to publish it to the world, when it cannot possibly give pleasure to any person, and will probably give pain to some, is, in my judgment, neither wit nor gratitude: and I am sure Mr Boswell, who is a very good-natured man, would have seen it in this light, if he had given himself time to think of it. At Aberdeen the two travellers were most hospitably entertained, as they themselves acknowledge; and when they left it, they said to one another, that they had heard at Aberdeen nothing which deserved attention. There was nothing in *saying* this: but why is it recorded? For no reason but I can imagine, unless it be in order to return evil for good. I found so many passages of this nature in the book, that, upon

the whole, it left rather a disagreeable impression upon my mind; though I readily own there are many things in it which pleased me.

"The Bishop of Chester's thoughts on this subject are so pertinent and so well expressed, that I am sure you will like to see them: "You "will," says his Lordship in a letter which I received yesterday, "be entertained with Mr Boswell's "book, and edified with some of Johnson's pray- "ers; but you will wish that many things in "both those publications had been omitted: and, "perhaps, if they had not existed at all, it would "have been better still. Johnson's friends will "absolutely kill him with kindness. His own "character, if left to itself, would naturally raise "him very high in the estimation of mankind; "but by loading it with panegyric, anecdotes, "lives, journals, &c. and by hanging round it "even all his little foibles and infirmities, they "will sink it lower in the opinion of the best "judges of merit. I saw lately a letter from Mrs "Piozzi, (late Mrs Thrale,) in which she an- "nounces her 'Anecdotes of Dr Johnson' to be "published this winter; and after that are to "follow his Letters to her, &c. Mr Boswell also "is to give us his Life; and Sir John Hawkins

" is writing another, to be prefixed to a complete " edition of his works. Our modest and worthy " friend, Mr Langton, is the only one who ob- " serves a profound silence on this occasion; and " yet no one could speak to better purpose, if he " pleased, and if he thought it would answer any " good end."

" Johnson's harsh and foolish censure of Mrs Montagu's book does not surprise me; for I have heard him speak contemptuously of it. It is, for all that, one of the best, most original, and most elegant, pieces of criticism in our language, or any other. Johnson had many of the talents of a critic; but his want of temper, his violent prejudices, and something, I am afraid, of an envious turn of mind, made him often a very unfair one. Mrs Montagu was very kind to him; but Mrs Montagu has more wit than any body; and Johnson could not bear that any person should be thought to have wit but himself. Even Lord Chesterfield, and, what is more strange, even Mr Burke, he would not allow to have wit. He preferred Smollett to Fielding. He would not grant that Armstrong's poem on 'Health,' or the tragedy of 'Douglas,' had any merit. He told me, that he never read Milton through, till

he was obliged to do it, in order to gather words for his Dictionary. He spoke very peevishly of the masque of Comus; and when I urged that there was a great deal of exquisite poetry in it; "Yes," said he, "but it is like gold hid under a "rock;" to which I made no reply; for indeed I did not well understand it. Pray, did you ever see Mr Potter's 'Remarks on Johnson's Lives of 'the Poets?' It is very well worth reading.

"By a Latin letter which I lately received from Holland, I am informed, that Dutch translations of the first part of my last book, and of my 'Remarks on Laughter,' have been published, the one at Haerlem, the other at Dort. I am greatly obliged to the Dutch. The 'Essay on 'Truth,' they translated twelve years ago; and I have a copy of the version, which I am told, by those who understand the language, is very exact.

"I become every day more and more doubtful of the propriety of publishing the Scotticisms. Our language (I mean the English) is degenerating very fast; and many phrases, which I know to be Scottish idioms, have got into it of late years: so that many of my strictures are liable to be opposed by authorities which the world ac-

counts unexceptionable. However, I shall send you the manuscript, since you desire it, and let you dispose of it as you please."

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On this subject of Mr Boswell's 'Tour to the 'Hebrides,' I likewise received a letter, some time thereafter from Dr Beattie, which I shall insert here. But as it refers to one of mine, to which it is in answer; and as that letter contains some information respecting the publication of that work of Mr Boswell's which I am not ill pleased should be known, I shall venture, for the first and only time, to insert in this work a letter of my own. I found it among some hundreds, which Dr Beattie had preserved: for he seems seldom or never to have destroyed the letters he received from his friends.

## LETTER CLXXXVII.

### SIR WILLIAM FORBES TO DR BEATTIE.

Edinburgh, 9th January, 1786.

" Boswell's * book, which I dare say you have seen before now, contains many things that *might*, and several that *ought* to have been omitted. In regard to those of the first description, Mr Boswell seems to have adopted the idea of the writers on

* Mr Boswell's acquaintance and mine began at a very early period of life, and an intimate correspondence continued between us ever after. It scarcely requires to be mentioned here, that he was the chosen friend of General Paoli and of Dr Johnson. The circle of his acquaintance among the learned, the witty, and indeed among men of all ranks and professions, was extremely extensive, as his talents were considerable, and his convivial powers made his company much in request. His warmth of heart towards his friends, was very great; and I have known few men who possessed a stronger sense of piety, or more fervent devotion, (tinctured, no doubt, with some little share of superstition, which had probably been in some degree fostered by his habits of intimacy with Dr Johnson,) perhaps not always sufficient to regulate his imagination or direct his conduct, yet still genuine, and founded both in his understanding and his heart. His 'Life' of that extraordinary man, with all the faults with which it has been charged, must be allowed to be one of

glass, so well described by Lord Hailes in one of his papers in the 'World,' who think a fact ought to be recorded merely because it is a fact: for surely he has retained a great deal of conversation neither instructive nor entertaining; although other parts again are highly so. As to the offensive passages, I really do not believe that he considered them in that light when he gave them to the press: for I do believe him to have been sincere in his declaration, that it was not his intention to hurt any mortal; and my memory serves me to recollect many passages of the original MS. which he has omitted for that very reason; and in his second edition, which is now printed, he tells me he has omitted a good deal of the first. I have been accused of being his adviser to print the book, from a letter of mine towards the conclusion; which, by the bye, he inserted without my knowledge or permission: but that letter merely related to a perusal of the MS., at a time when I had not the most distant

the most characteristic and entertaining biographical works in the English language. For Mr Boswell I entertained a sincere friendship, which he returned by the strongest proof in his power to confer, by leaving me the guardian of his children. He died in London, 19th May, 1795, in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

idea of his printing his Journal. I have also been accused of having written that complimentary letter, because of the eulogium with which he has been pleased to honour me in his book: but that passage, in which I am mentioned in so flattering a manner, was not in the original MS. which I saw. * As his 'Life of Dr Johnson' will probably be a work of a similar nature, I have taken the liberty of strongly enjoining him to be more careful what he inserts, so as not to make to himself enemies, or give pain to any person whom he may have occasion to mention: and I hope he will do so, as he seems sorry for some parts of the other.

"I have been much pleased with Dr Johnson's 'Prayers and Meditations:' they show him to have been a man of sincere and fervent piety: but I think Mr Strahan has been much to blame in printing the MS. *verbatim*. I do not think an editor is at liberty to *add* a single iota to the work of his author; but surely there could have been no crime in Mr Strahan's retrenching occasionally a few things, which throw, in some degree, an air of ridicule on a work of so serious a

* He has mentioned this in his second edition, p. 524.

nature; and which, by giving cause for scoffing, will perhaps diminish the good effects the book might otherwise be expected to produce: had he likewise substituted Elizabeth, (which Boswell tells me was Mrs Johnson's real name,) in the place of such a ridiculous appellation as *Tetty*, surely no man could have found fault with the change. It is somewhat extraordinary to see a mind so vigorous as his was, distressing itself with terrors on subjects apparently of no great importance, while the whole tenor of his life had been so irreproachable and useful to the world by his writings; which, one should think, are of sufficient magnitude to render unnecessary his self-accusation of idleness.

"It would give you pleasure, I am sure, to hear of Mr William Gregory's* having got a living. He is a most excellent young man; and has well supported Dr Reid's character of him, when, in a letter to me while he was at Glasgow college, the Doctor called him *one of the incorruptibles*. The living is worth about L. 160, and it is a good thing to have such a patron as the Archbishop of Canterbury."

* Son of the late Dr John Gregory. He is since dead.

## LETTER CLXXXVIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 12th February, 1786.

"It is with much concern, and with the most cordial sympathy, that I condole with Lady Forbes and you on your late afflictions. I pray God they may be sanctified to you; that you may be strengthened to bear them without injury to your health; and that the dear survivors may be spared for a comfort to their parents, a blessing to one another, and an ornament to society. Those, whom a wise Providence has been pleased to take away, have been soon released from their warfare, and have now an eternity of happiness before them, without the possibility of change. This consideration will sooth your melancholy, and will shortly, I trust, enable you to overcome it.

"What you say of Mr Boswell coincides with my sentiments exactly. I am convinced he meant no harm; but many things in his book are injudicious, and must create him enemies, and are

really injurious to the memory of Dr Johnson. Johnson's faults were balanced by many and great virtues; and when that is the case, the virtues only should be remembered, and the faults entirely forgotten. But in this book, Johnson's want of temper, want of candour, obstinacy in dispute, and rage of contradiction, (for most of his speeches began with *No, Sir,*) are minutely recorded and exemplified. I cannot but take notice of a very illiberal saying of Johnson with respect to the late Mr Strahan, (Mr Boswell has politely concealed the name,) who was a man to whom Johnson had been much obliged, and whom, on account of his abilities and virtues, as well as rank in life, every one who knew him (and Johnson as well as others) acknowledged to be a most respectable character. See page 94. * I have seen the letter mentioned by Dr Gerard, and I have

* After so severe a reproof from Dr Beattie, it is proper, for his sake, to insert here the paragraph from Mr Boswell's 'Journal' which occasioned it.

"Dr Gerard told us, that an eminent printer was very intimate with Warburton." *Johnson.* "Why, Sir, he has printed "some of his works, and, perhaps, bought the property of some "of them. The intimacy is such as one of the Professors here "may have with one of the carpenters, who is repairing the college," &c. &c.

seen many other letters from Bishop Warburton to Mr Strahan. They were very particularly acquainted; and Mr Strahan's merit entitled him to be on a footing of intimacy with any Bishop, or any British subject. He was eminently skilled in composition, and the English language; excelled in the epistolary style; had corrected (as he told me himself) the phraseology of both Mr Hume and Dr Robertson; he was a faithful friend, and his great knowledge of the world, and of business, made him a very useful one. His friendship for Mr Hume did not prevent his being a very warm friend of mine. He told me some curious anecdotes of Mr Hume, which I took down in writing at the time, and which, if you please, I shall send you.

"Johnson's book of Prayers is, as Macbeth says, "a sorry sight." In themselves the prayers have merit; but the best passages are taken from the 'Book of Common Prayer,' which is indeed a rich and inexhaustible fund. To compose forms of devotion is a most improving exercise; and to publish them may be beneficial: but to publish *a history* of one's own devotions and alms, is something so like "praying in the corners of the "streets," that I cannot think Johnson would

have consented to it till want of health had impaired his faculties. Some of the memorandums are such as cannot be read without pain and pity. Others are of a different character. To set down in a devotional diary, "*N. B.* I dined to-day on "herring and potatoes," is a most extraordinary incongruity."

## LETTER CLXXXIX.

DR BEATTIE TO THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

Aberdeen, 21st July, 1786.

"Had not my right-hand been disabled by a bruise, of which I have not entirely got the better, I should have sooner returned my grateful acknowledgments to your Lordship, for your most obliging letter. Your approbation of my little book* does me the greatest honour; and

* "Evidences of the Christian Religion, briefly and plainly stated;" in which Dr Beattie has given, if not a regular deduction, a concise and most useful summary, of the most striking and popular arguments, in elegant and perspicuous lan- in support of the divine origin of the Gospel. It will

will have much influence in rendering it successful. Lord Hailes, with whom I passed a day not long ago, is also well pleased with it; and, in general, it seems likely to meet with a reception far more favourable than I had reason to expect. It is indeed a very brief summary; but my friends are pleased to think it has on that account a better chance, in these days, to be read, than if it had been of a greater size.

"Before I put it to the press, I was very anxious to see your Lordship's 'Sermons,' (preached at Lincoln's-inn,) of which I had heard such an account as greatly raised my curiosity. But even the best books find their way slowly into this remote corner. I have read the book once and again with great delight; and it will be my own fault if I am not the better for it as long as I live. My approbation can add nothing to its fame; yet I must beg leave to say, that I particularly admire your happy talent in expounding difficult texts, and the perspicuity, conciseness,

be difficult, perhaps, to find any other book on the subject that contains more valuable matter, so well arranged, in so small a compass, as this little treatise of Dr Beattie's; which, although meant chiefly for those who are just finishing their academical course, will be perused at any age, by the serious and devout, with equal profit and delight.

and elegance, of your style; which I look upon as the perfection of pulpit-eloquence; being equally captivating to the learned, and intelligible to the simple.

"Though my health will not now permit me to attempt a long journey, yet I still flatter myself with the hope, that I shall one day avail myself of your kind invitation, and pay my duty to your Lordship at Hartlebury. The last time I was in England I did seriously intend it, but was prevented by illness."

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In the year 1786 there were published at Aberdeen, "Outlines of a Plan for uniting the King's "and Marischal Colleges of Old and New Aber-"deen, with a view of rendering the System of "Education there more complete."

A similar idea of an union had been started in the year 1747, in 1754, and in 1770; but on each of those occasions, such opposition had arisen to it from one quarter or another, that it had always fallen to the ground. It was now thought that it might be revived with better

hopes of success; either from the measure being better understood, or from the conditions on which it was proposed to be carried into effect being rendered less exceptionable than they had formerly been. It is proper to mention, that those two universities, although situated within a mile of each other, are two perfectly distinct and separate establishments, as much so as the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, each having her own professors, separate revenues, and separate jurisdictions. As neither the one nor the other contained a system of education so perfect, nor advantages so considerable when separate, as it was thought they might be made to embrace, if united, and one common seminary of learning were formed out of the two, many persons were of opinion, that such an union, if it could be brought about upon fair and equitable principles, would tend greatly to the benefit of both. It was thought, for example, that one professor for each branch of science would be fully equal to teach, when united, the small number of students attendant on each separate class; and that the classes, by containing a larger number, though not too great a body of students, would probably draw into one class a greater

proportion of young men of superior abilities, whereby a greater emulation would be excited; while the professors, whose incomes depend chiefly on their class-fees, would find them augmented by their increased number of students, whom it would be their object and endeavour to render as numerous as in their power, by their industry and attention. Nor would this be all the advantage which this newly-modelled seminary of learning would derive from such an union; for, by means of the double salaries paid at present to the professors of the same branch, one of each of which it was proposed to abolish, as the present incumbents should die out, new professorships might be established in the united universities, which do not at present exist in either. Thus, a school of medicine, and another of law, might be introduced at Aberdeen, as well as at Glasgow and Edinburgh, to the very great advantage of the northern part of the kingdom. Professorships of astronomy, agriculture, and other branches not taught there at present, might also be established; a botanic garden might be created; the libraries, as well as the museum and philosophical apparatus, augmented by additional purchases: and thus students, from the remoter

parts of the country, might have the advantage of finding a more complete system of education open to them nearer home, without being put to the trouble and expence of going to look for it in a southern part of the country.

Such were the plausible arguments urged in favour of the union, by the Principal and Professors of Marischal College, by whom the plan was at this time revived. They were joined, however, by no more than two of the Professors of the neighbouring university; the Principal and all the others declaring themselves strenuously adverse to the measure, as tending to a complete overthrow of the constitution of their university, of which they said the revenues and the patronage were by much the most considerable; and therefore the advantages to be derived from such an union would be all on the side of Marischal College.

Whether these were the real motives on the part of the Professors of King's College, or whether, from the omission of any ceremonious punctilios on the part of the Professors of Marischal College towards their brethren of King's, in the manner of first opening the business, the opposition is to be attributed, it is not easy now to

say. But that Dr Beattie thought favourably of the measure, there can be no question; as he appears to have taken considerable pains to bring it about: and that he must have believed it possible to accomplish such an union, without encroaching on the rights and privileges of either party, his known love of justice will not allow us to doubt. As it was obvious, however, that no union could possibly take place between two separate and independent societies, without the hearty concurrence of at least a majority of each, after some farther fruitless attempts, which served only to widen the difference between the two, the measure was finally abandoned as hopeless; and has never since been revived. Whether such an union be really practicable, or whether, if to be attained, it would be for the benefit of science in general, are points foreign from the present memoir. It ought not to be omitted, however, that as such an union could not be set on foot without even the attempt being productive of some bad humour among the members of both colleges, as soon as the question was fairly laid to rest, Dr Beattie exerted himself strenuously, and not unsuccessfully, in allaying any heat that had arisen. Having an annual custom

of dining together, at the first return of their yearly meeting, Dr Beattie laboured, that all that had past on the subject should be buried in oblivion, and nothing prevail but harmony and good humour.*

## LETTER CXC.

### DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Peterhead, 28th July, 1786.

"I have the pleasure to inform your Grace, though you have no doubt heard by other means, that the scheme for the union of our two colleges goes on wonderfully well, and that the greater part of the nobility and gentry in this part of the kingdom seem very much inclined to

* In the course of this business, a variety of papers, memoirs, cases, plans, (but none of them written by Dr Beattie,) were printed and circulated by both universities, where the arguments on each side are detailed. Of these I have in my possession a large collection. But I am surprised so little is preserved on the subject in the "Scots Magazine," although professedly a repository of intelligence regarding Scottish transactions.

promote it. The petition to the King is subscribed by the whole Marischal College, (the rector and dean of faculty included,) and by two of the other college. I wrote the other day to solicit Lord Kinnoull's approbation and advice, which I am confident will not be with-held. We can never be sufficiently thankful to the Duke of Gordon and your Grace for the honour you have done us in entering so warmly into our views; and I rejoice in the hope, that we shall, in a little time, under the influence of so high a patronage, succeed in a measure, which most of us have had at heart these many years, and which every friend to literature, and the north of Scotland, unless blinded by prejudice and self-interest, must see to be so very desirable.

"I have deferred sending my little book* to the library of Gordon-castle, till a new and more correct edition should come out; which will probably be soon, as it has been a great while at the press. The first edition was all sold in about five weeks, and has met with a reception much more favourable than I could have expected."

* "Evidences of the Christian Religion."

## LETTER CXCI.

DR BENJAMIN RUSH TO DR BEATTIE.

Philadelphia, 1st August, 1786.

"The American revolution, which divided the British empire, made no breach in the republic of letters. As a proof of this, a stranger to your person, and a citizen of a country lately hostile to yours, has expressed his obligations to you for the knowledge and pleasure he has derived from your excellent writings, by procuring your admission into the American Philosophical Society; a certificate of which, subscribed by our illustrious president, Dr Franklin, and the other officers of the Society, you will receive by the next vessel that sails to any port in North-Britain from this city.

"The stranger, alluded to, finished his studies in medicine in Edinburgh in the year 1769, and has ever since taught chemistry and medicine in the college of Philadelphia. His name (with the greatest respect for yours) is,

"BENJAMIN RUSH."

## LETTER CXCII.

DR BEATTIE TO THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.

Aberdeen, 10th September, 1786.

"Permit me now to return my most grateful acknowledgments to your Grace and the Duke, for your goodness in interesting yourselves so much in my recovery. When I saw the letter to Dr Livingston, your kind attention drew tears from my eyes. I have had a pretty severe illness. The fever came on about six weeks ago; and I am still so weak, that it fatigues me to walk up or down stairs, and exhausts me to write the shortest letter upon the most ordinary business.

"I know not what others are, but I begin to be low-spirited on the subject of the union. Mr ******'s last letter seems, as Milton says, to cast

"Ominous conjecture on the whole success."

Lord ****** too appears to have some unfavourable prepossessions. Lord **** is very old and infirm, and I much doubt, whether we can with

propriety give him the trouble of taking an active part in the affair. I am very willing to believe, that the present state of my nerves may incline me more to despondence than there is any good reason for; and I heartily wish this may be the case. Whatever may be the result, the Marischal College have no reason to be ashamed of what they have done. The very general approbation which their conduct has received from the most respectable part of the community, does them the greatest honour, and will, I trust, prepare matters for bringing forward an union one time or other, and probably at a period not very remote. That is now clearly ascertained, which was never so well known before, that the voice of the public declares for an union in the most explicit terms."

## LETTER CXCIII.

DR BEATTIE TO SIR WILLIAM FORBES.

Aberdeen, 14th September, 1780.

"I am indebted to you for two very affectionate and entertaining letters, and will endeavour

to answer them as soon as my head and hand are a little better settled. At present I can hardly hold a pen.

"I am very happy to hear of your visit to Hunton. I often wished the Bishop of Chester and you acquainted. He wrote me word of his having met with Lady Forbes and you, and of the great satisfaction he had in the hopes of a visit from you. You would like Mrs Porteus greatly. Her cheerfulness, good sense, and goodness of heart, make her a most excellent companion for the Bishop, and exceedingly beloved by all who know her. As you were but a day at Hunton, you would see but little of Lady Twisden, who is as remarkable for modesty as for every other virtue; but if you had been with her for some days, you would have found her most worthy of that character which I think I formerly gave you of her.

"We have had much talk about uniting our two colleges. I was desired to write to you about it long ago; but would not then trouble you, as Lady Forbes was indisposed; and of late I have not been able to write. The union is much approved of by the country in general; but it is

opposed by the Principal and six of the Professors of King's College. I shall tell you more about it very soon, and send you some memorials and other papers."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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